Macapagal to Defensor: Go if you must

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2001 ★ 78 PAGES 6 SECTIONS VOL.16 NO. 82 ₱15

Ash Wednesday: 'Dust thou art…'

SOON after their answered prayers culminated in People Power II, Filipino Catholics are again enjoined to turn prayerful today, Ash Wednesday, which begins the 40-day Lenten season.

The faithful are expected to pack the country's churches to have their foreheads marked with the sign of the cross traced in ash, a grim reminder of human mortality: "Dust thou art and

ASH/ A18

Wong links Biazon to mess

₱10-M deal involved 2 winning bidders for night-vision goggles

BY CARLITO PABLO
AND ARMAND N. NOCUM

IN THE controversial speech that got him in hot water, Rear Adm. Guillermo Wong accused former Marine commandant and now Sen. Rodolfo Biazon of involvement in an alleged questionable transaction in the Marine Corps.

Speaking in Filipino on Feb. 15 before the Marines, the military's primary fighting unit, Wong said: "You were given money by one of your former commandants, General Biazon. You acted on it. The money was released to us at headquarters, and we also acted on it. When it was time for reckoning, two dealers appeared—two, both connected with General Biazon."

The videotape of Wong's speech was shown yesterday at a press conference called by Marine officers in Fort Bonifacio to prove that Wong had indeed berated them in public.

Reporters were provided transcripts of Wong's speech.

Col. Ben Dolorfino, Marine chief of staff, said the issue at hand was not "reforms" but Wong's "leadership style that has caused serious damage" to the corps.

Military sources said the transaction involved P10 million for the purchase of night-vision goggles and related communications equipment.

They said the funds came from Biazon's Congressional Initiatives Allocation, a form of pork barrel given to senators and congressmen.

The money was supposedly allocated in the latter half of last year. But before the Navy headquarters could act on the fund release, the Marines proceeded with a bidding, which was won by a firm called Lemus.

Since that bidding was without prior approval from the Navy, the mother unit of the Marine Corps, the Navy headquarters conducted a separate bidding that was won by a firm known as Timbol Trading.

The two winning bidders had alleged links to Biazon.

Asked to comment, Biazon yesterday admitted having worked for the allocation of P10 million for the project. But he vehemently denied involvement in any irregularity.

"Yes, I have an insertion for the purchase of special equipment, but I did not know if the money had

WONG/ A18

PRESIDENT Macapagal logs on to Inq7.net at the launch on Tuesday of the joint venture of the INQUIRER and GMA Network Inc. From left, are: Dennis Valdes, president/CEO of Inq7 Interactive Inc.; Felipe Gozon, GMA chair/president/CEO; Finance Secretary Bert Romulo; PDI board chair Marixi Prieto, Judith Duavit-Vazquez, Inq7 board chair; DOTC Secretary Pantaleon Alvarez and Sandy Prieto-Romualdez, PDI president/CEO. DENNIS SABANGAN

GMA cites power of Internet

BY ERWIN G. OLIVA
AND JOEY G. ALARILLA

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday greeted millions of Filipinos in cyberspace and urged them to use the Internet to share their thoughts on issues involving the Philippines.

Ms Macapagal was the guest of honor at yesterday's launching of INQ7 Interactive Inc., a joint-venture news delivery company of the Philippine Daily Inquirer Inc. and GMA Network Inc.

"I urge our fellow Filipinos to use this electronic feedback facility to share their thoughts on issues about our beloved country. Mabuhay!" the President declared, as she became the first registered user of INQ7.net.

Ms Macapagal also inaugurated a new feedback facility in INQ7.net, putting her electronically in touch with Filipinos all over the globe.

The new feedback page allows Ms Macapagal to respond to questions and comments from Filipinos all over the country and outside the Philippines.

In her speech, Ms Macapagal recalled how the Internet aided

GMA/ A18

Golez: Military row inevitable given Wong's 'crusading mode'

BY DONA PAZZIBUGAN

NATIONAL Security Adviser Roilo Golez believes that the ongoing turmoil in the military was inevitable given the "crusading" personality of Rear Adm. Guillermo Wong.

He said, however, that the row between Wong and the Marine Corps could have been averted if the Navy flag officer in command had been "less outspoken" about the alleged questionable procurement of military supplies.

Golez, a former Navy colonel, said he had known Wong "for a long time" since their days at the Philippine Military Academy, where Wong was ahead of Golez's class.

He described the admiral as "intense" and possessing a "vitriolic tongue."

"That confrontation (between Wong and the Marines) was bound to happen irrespective of who the president is," Golez told the weekly "Bulong-Pulungan sa Westin" forum yesterday.

In a talk later with the INQUIRER, Golez said: "Maybe it would not have happened if he had been less outspoken."

According to Golez, Wong had been on "a crusading mode" and "going to several places trying to clean up the Navy" since his appointment as Navy chief last November.

"Some conflicts are bound to happen because these are talented, assertive people," Golez said.

In Davao City, Sen. Gregorio Honasan said the best way to resolve the turmoil in the military was for Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Angelo Reyes to order Marine officers and men back to the barracks.

He said the top brass should then explain to the Marine Corps the

GOLEZ/ A18

Espinosa mad at Wong; Meco waiting

BY CARLITO PABLO

LT. GEN. Edgardo Espinosa yesterday reacted angrily to being linked to the alleged purchase of substandard helmets worth P3.8 million during his term as Marine commandant.

Referring to Rear Adm. Guillermo Wong, whose public criticism of financial irregularities in the Marine Corps has resulted in his being forced to relinquish his

ESPINOSA/ A18

Lean crowd greets Estrada in Zambo

OVERWHELMED by women in Zamboanga City, where former President Estrada is campaigning for his wife, Dr. Loi Ejercito, who's running for the Senate. REUTERS

BY TJ BURGONIO

IN HIS first trip outside Manila since his ouster last month, disgraced President Joseph Estrada campaigned yesterday for his wife Dr. Luisa "Loi" Ejercito, a senatorial candidate of the Puwersa ng Masa, in Zamboanga City.

Estrada hopped out of a borrowed executive jet to a muted welcome at the Zamboanga airport by about two dozen supporters. Reporters outnumbered the well wishers.

The fans raised placards, which read "We Love You Erap" and "Erap Forever," referring to the nickname of the former movie star, who waved back at them.

"I'm happy to be here," he said. "I feel more at home in Zamboanga."

A middle-aged woman broke through a small cordon of his security guards, crying and hugging him. "You're still my President, I will die for you," said the woman be-

LEAN/ A19

SC to rule on Erap suit on March 13

BY CATHY YAMSUAN

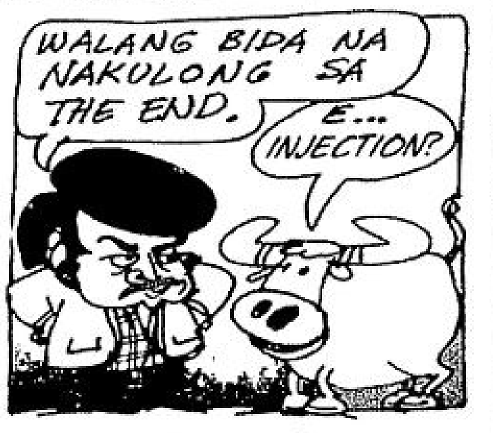
JOSEPH Estrada had always avoided the number 13, even denying at times that he was the 13th president of the Philippines.

Here's the "bad" news—13 justices of the Supreme Court will decide on March 13 whether he is still the country's President.

Estrada has no choice as this is the date being eyed by Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. for the tribunal to decide on whether he is still the country's President, according to Supreme Court spokesperson Ismael Khan.

Estrada yesterday insisted that he was the country's President. "I'm still, legally and constitutionally the President of the Republic," he told reporters, who outnumbered his well wishers at the Zamboanga Airport.

SC/ A19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E... INJECTION?

Jail farthest from Erap's mind

EVEN as the new administration is preparing more charges against him, ousted President Joseph Estrada doesn't think he'll ever be donning an orange prison uniform or sporting a white-sidewall haircut.

Five weeks after he was dumped out of office in Edsa People Power II, Estrada said in an interview with Agence

JAIL/ A19

Second FRONT PAGE

WALA NAMAN PALANG GULO... GUSTO LANG TUMAKBO!

GMA to Defensor: Go if you must

By Armand N. Nocum

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday said she would not stop Michael Defensor, the chair of the Housing and Urban Development Council, from leaving the Cabinet if he wants to return to Congress.

But the President said Defensor, a former Quezon City congressman, should not use alleged turf wars in the Cabinet as an excuse when what he wanted was to revive his political plans.

According to Ms Macapagal, she had told Defensor when she met with him on Monday that he was free to stay or go.

"I told him that if you want to run for Congress, you will make a good congressman and I can't stop you," she said, adding that as soon as he files his candidacy today, Defensor is deemed resigned.

"But I told him that if you are going to leave the Cabinet, let it be because you want to run for Congress and not because you cannot work with the other appointees because they can work very well with you," Ms Macapagal said in a news briefing.

She said Defensor had the capability to be a good Cabinet man or a congressman.

"He can be good in both," she commented.

Regarding reports that Defensor had threatened to resign because he was upset over appointments made in two housing agencies without his knowledge, the President said Defensor did not make such a threat in her presence.

According to her, she had also met with the appointees concerned, the heads of the National Home Mortgage Finance Corp. and the National Housing Authority and they both pledged to "follow the unified command of Defensor."

However, Ms Macapagal said she would have to let go of NHMFC appointee Zorayda Alonso, not because of Defensor's complaint but because the one holding the post now has a fixed term and is refusing to resign.

She said she would appoint Alonso to a financing agency, like the People's Credit and Finance Corp.

The President defended the head of the Presidential Management Staff, Vicky Garchitorena, who earlier apologized for her "mistake" in not consulting Defensor regarding the new appointments.

According to the President, it was she who gave the names of the appointees to Garchitorena.

Presidential Spokesperson Renato Corona, who joined the President and Defensor in a breakfast meeting on Monday, said Defensor would not resign now that Alonso is being given a new post.

Clashes with MILF isolated incidents –Ermita

RECENT clashes between soldiers and Moro rebels likely started as fighters stumbled onto each other in remote areas and will not prevent peace talks, Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita said yesterday.

The military and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front have accused each other of launching attacks since President Macapagal-Arroyo declared a unilateral government ceasefire a week ago to help renew peace talks.

"It is very possible that some elements of the MILF who may not have gotten the word from their own commanders and may have strolled into some areas where the army is present," Ermita said in a press conference. "It is inevitable that there are shots. But, effectively, since the ceasefire, all units have suspended operations."

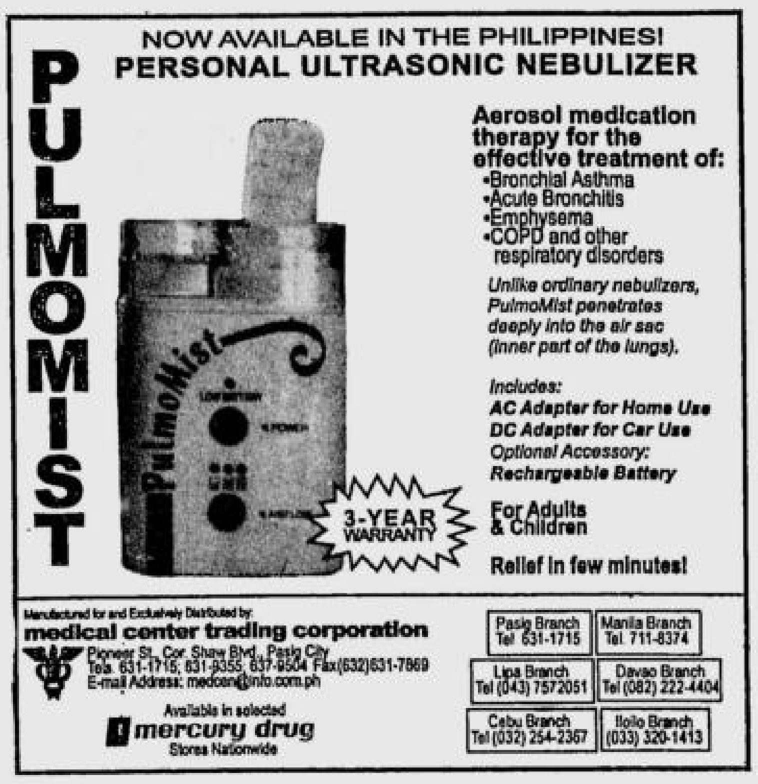
The military on Saturday said soldiers killed three rebels while repelling an MILF attack in a 15-minute gun battle.

But Ghazali Jaafar, MILF vice chair, accused the army of launching attacks and said his men "are being hunted like wild animals."

The rebels have not declared their own ceasefire but said they would only fight if attacked.

The rebels refused a government invitation for an initial meeting Monday in Davao City. In a letter to government chief negotiator Jesus Dureza, MILF lawyer Lanang Ali said the rebels welcomed Arroyo's peace overtures but were discussing how to respond.

Peace talks collapsed last year after then-President Joseph Estrada ordered a massive military campaign that captured at least 45 MILF camps in Mindanao. *AP*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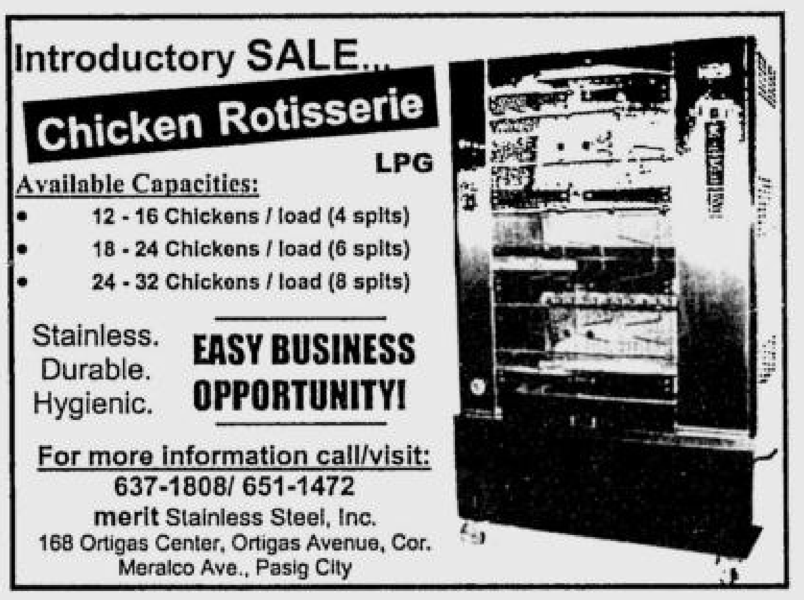
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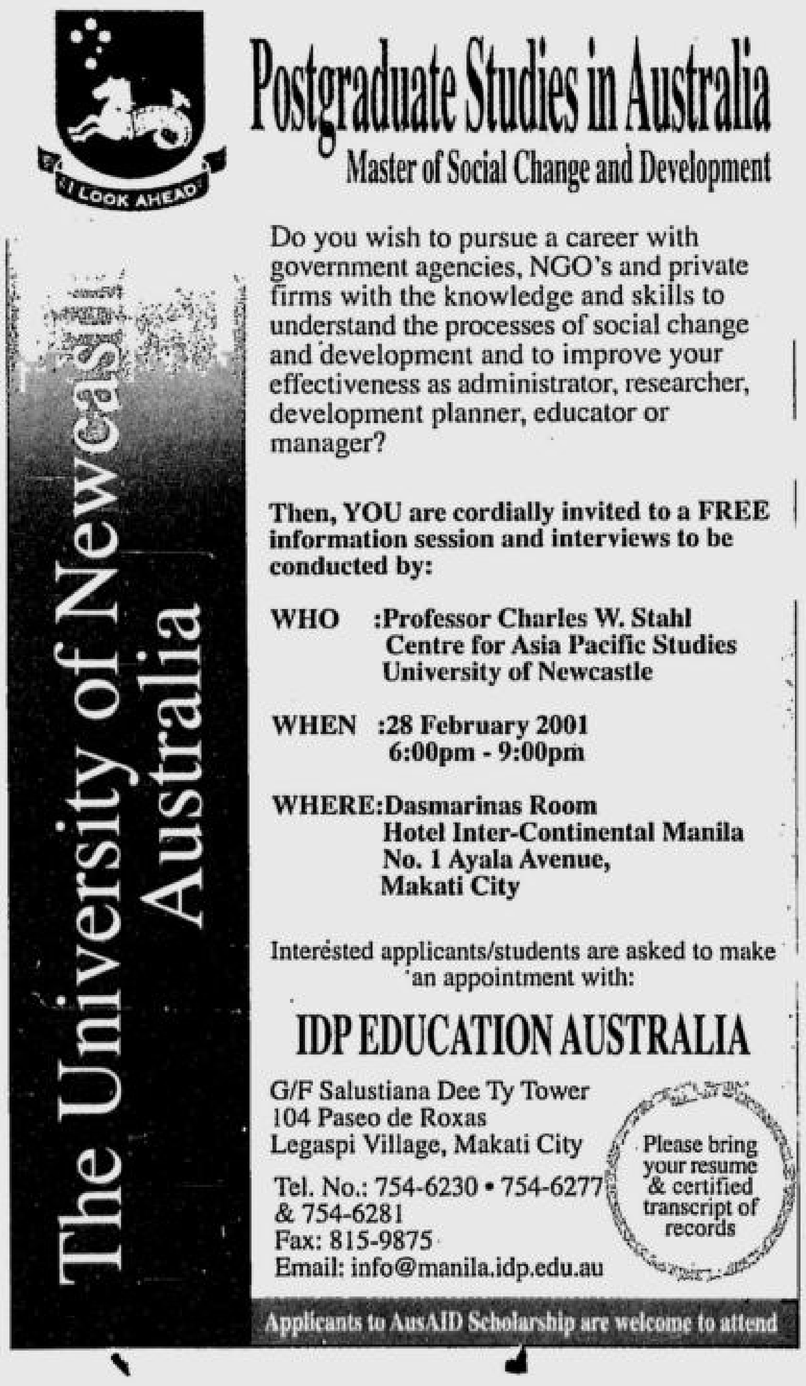
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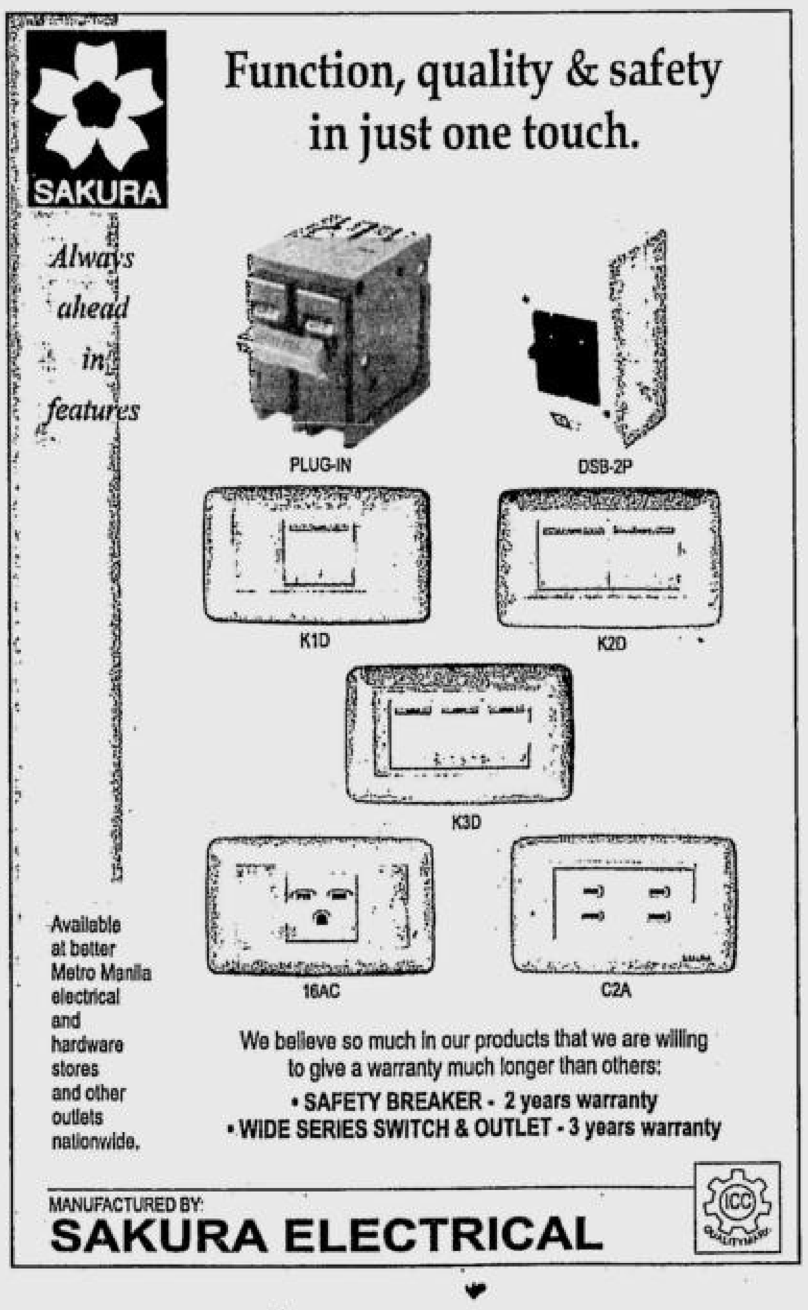
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Roco stops reviews for NEAT and NSAT

By Blanche S. Rivera

ROCO

EDUCATION Secretary Raul Roco has banned public and private schools from conducting review sessions for the annual aptitude tests for elementary and high school because the practice was "defrauding" the results of the exams.

The new chief of the Department of Education, Culture and Sports also said he would investigate reports that test questions and answers were leaked to certain schools, giving their students an edge in the National Elementary Achievement Test (NEAT) and the National Secondary Achievement Test (NSAT).

Roco said reviewing the students for the NEAT and NSAT would defeat the purpose of the tests because the exams would then produce the "results of the review" and "not the aptitude" of the students.

"If you review, then you fabricate the achievement and therefore you give the government false data," Roco said in a press briefing on Monday. "That must be stopped.".

The former senator, who caused the abolition of the "oppressive" and "discriminatory" National College Entrance Examination, also issued a circular, which prohibited the sale or distribution of reviewers.

The DECS used to produce reviewers and distribute these to public schools two weeks before the actual tests, while training the students on the procedures in taking the exams.

The latest NEAT and NSAT were taken last month by more than three million students.

Roco issued his order after some teachers from private and public schools complained that the answer keys were made available to students in the recent exams while parents lamented that they were compelled to pay for the cost of review sessions.

"It's like before with the NCEE, when you can buy the reviewers. Sometimes, you can buy the questions and sometimes you can buy the answers," Roco said. "If you fail in all the three, you can buy the grade."

Even if the NSAT and NEAT were different from the NCEE because the two tests were "feedback mechanisms," Roco said, it was still imperative that the DECS ensured that the results were "not fraudulent."

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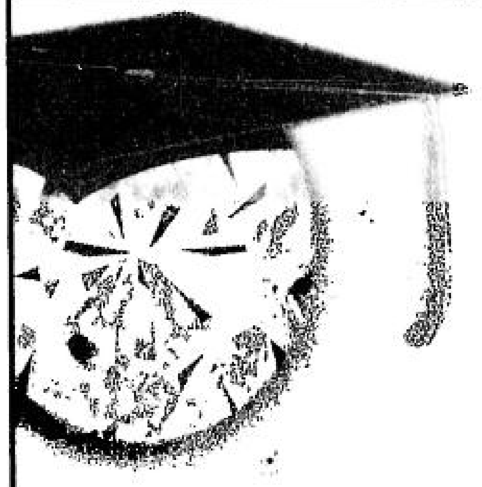

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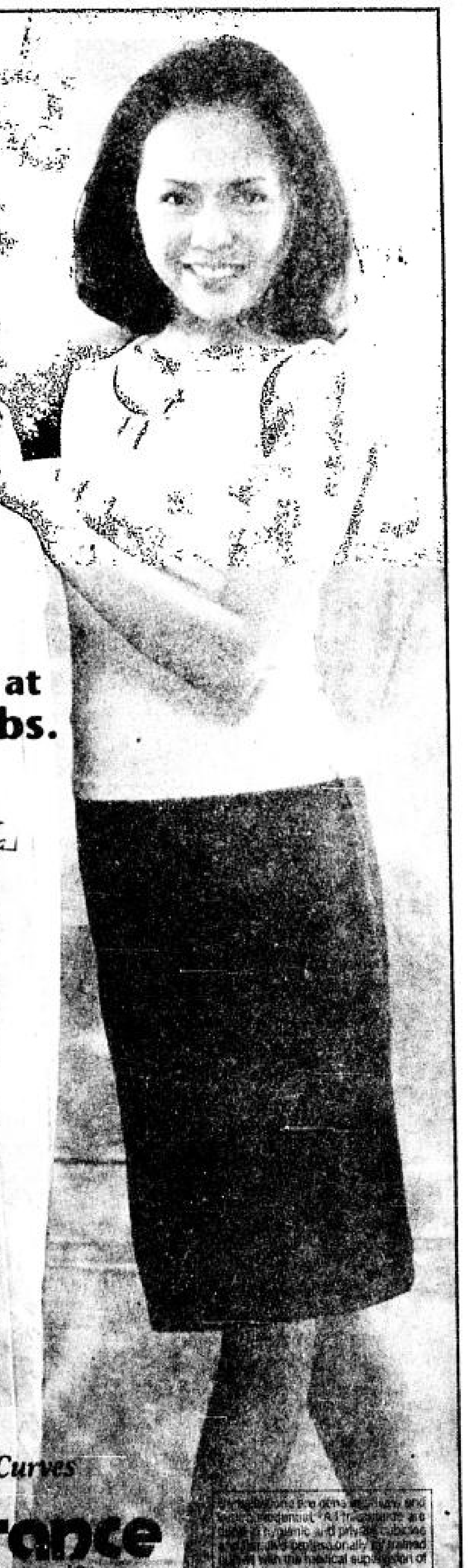

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Cojuangco candidacy provokes Lakas feud

A RANKING official of the Lakas-NUCD resigned yesterday from the party in protest of the decision of party leaders to junk him and instead field the son of business tycoon Eduardo Cojuangco as the party's congressional candidate in Pangasinan:

In a statement, Lakas-NUCD deputy secretary general Raul Lambino said he wrote a "scathing" letter to President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday to denounce the party decision which, he noted, was against party principles and the chief executive's opposition to money politics.

Lambino told the President that the choice of Marcos "Mark" Cojuangco "has compromised the party's larger interest and your administration has been threatened by allowing a hostile element to represent the same district from where Your Excellency comes."

Eduardo Cojuangco is a known ally of deposed President Joseph Estrada and is the president of the Nationalist People's Coalition.

Lambino said it was Lakas-NUCD executive director Joey Rufino who said that top party leaders, including Ms Macapagal, her husband lawyer Jose Miguel Arroyo and other officials were those who decided on Cojuangco's candidacy.

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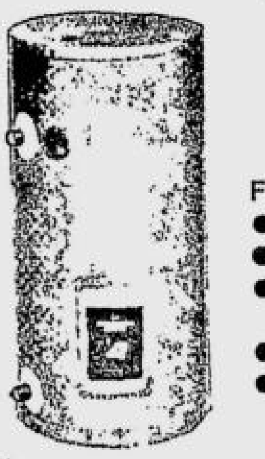


Private row behind ambush of 6 Japanese, Gloria says

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday said a private dispute was apparently behind an ambush in Cebu City targeting six Japanese workers who survived the attack.

Ms Macapagal said she hoped the attack would not disrupt Japanese development aid to the country following the incident Thursday in which three gunmen fired on two vans with two Filipino drivers and six Japanese engineers, riddling one van with bullets.

In Cebu City, Toa Construction, the Japanese contractor in the multibillion-peso South Coastal Road (SCR) project, has suspended work following the ambush.

A company official, who asked not to be identified, said work had been suspended since Friday on instructions from the firm's top management.

Police in Cebu said they are closely coordinating with the Japanese Embassy in Manila as they launched a manhunt for three gunmen who attacked the Japanese engineers.

The President said there had been no communication from the Japanese government about whether development aid would be affected.

Japan is the country's single largest aid donor, with the Philippines receiving P36.7 billion in official development assistance last year.

"First of all, they were not harmed," she told a news conference, adding that the initial police investigation showed the attack was triggered by a "private dispute."

"Police are looking into it," she said without elaborating.

The Toa engineers were working on the land reclamation project on the shoreline of Barangay Inawayan.

Engineers Harutushi Usui, Hironobu Takeuchi and Yoshinobu Fukushima were on their way home at a little past 8 p.m. Thursday when three armed men tried to stop them, firing at their blue Isuzu Highlander, just a few meters from their staff house at St. Jude Acres Subdivision in Barangay Bulacao.

The three were not hurt. Their driver, Felix Go, suffered minor cuts from fragments of the broken windshield.

The three Japanese engineers are now in a "safehouse" and have refused to give any statement, whether to the police or the media.

A second vehicle carrying their coworkers Tashiniko Amano, Kyota Norizoki and Takayashu Koga "was spared from the ambush" because it immediately turned back.

Cebu City police chief Roland Dulay Roderos said investigations showed the motive for the attack was to "harass or scare" away TOA Construction from joining a public tender in May for a major project in Cebu. Two other firms he did not name were also prequalified to join.

"The harassment theory is bolstered by the usage of handguns only and that most of the bullets hit the upper portion of the van," Roderos said.

He said additional police security had been given to the Japanese workers while the Japanese Embassy in Manila was constantly being briefed on developments.

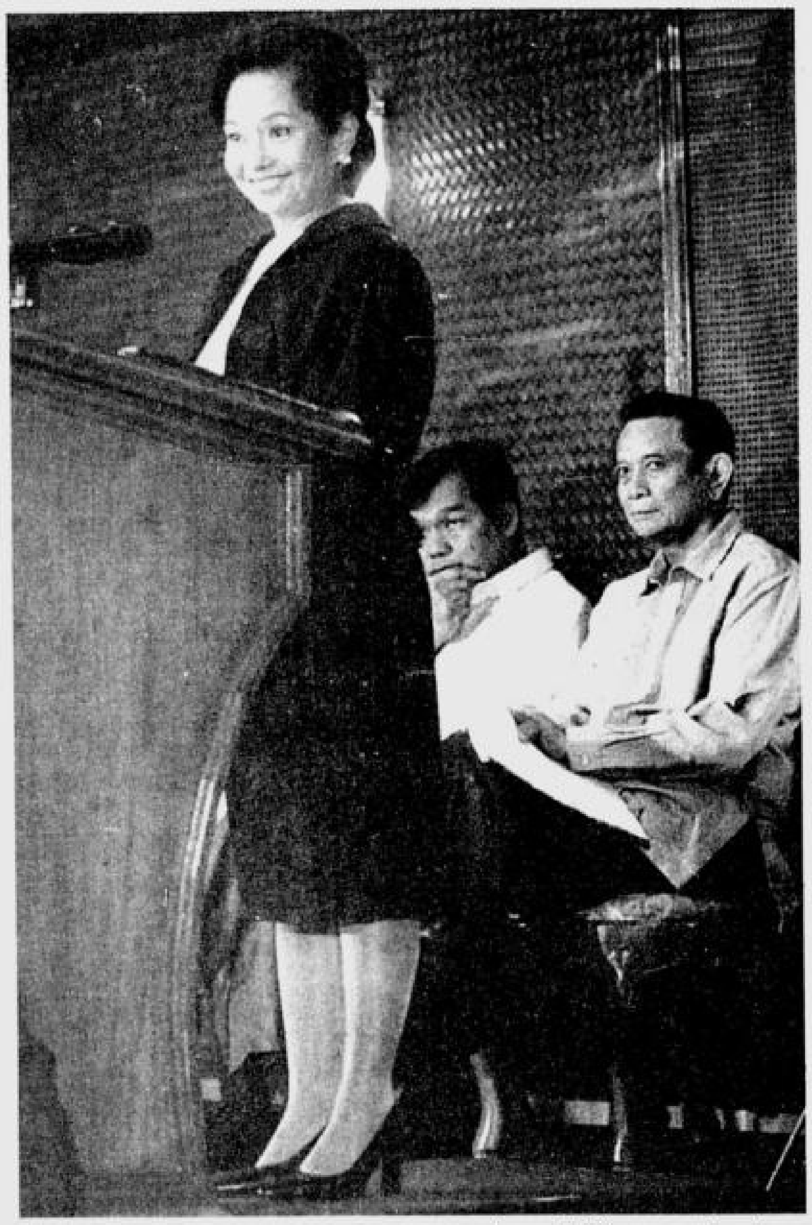
The P7-billion road project covers 4.5 km of coastal road from Barangay Inayawan to the northern tip of Cebu City. It is a major component of the South Reclamation Project undertaken by the city government, which is funded by Japan's Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund.

Cebu City Mayor Alvin Garcia expressed apprehension that the suspension of the road work might adversely affect the South Coastal Road project.

He said the government might incur losses because of the delay. The subcontractors would also be affected because no work means no pay.

But the Toa official said the project's suspension would not adversely affect the SCR's date of completion because they were way ahead of the schedule.

The project is 85 percent complete and is expected to be finished this September, five months ahead of its target date, he said. *AFP with a report from Roger V. Paller, PDI Visayas Bureau*



PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo appears at home fielding questions from reporters at yesterday's press conference at Malacañang. JOAN BONDOC

Comelec warns users of fake gun permits

By Gerald G. Lacuarta

THE COMMISSION on Elections yesterday said fake gun ban exemption permits have been proliferating throughout the country.

This was a mockery of the law prohibiting the unauthorized carrying of firearms during the election period, the poll body said.

The Comelec committee on firearms and security personnel has approved only 13,094 applications for exemption from the election gun ban.

However, Comelec information director Ma. Angelina Matibag said fake permits have been noted by the Philippine National Police.

"The Comelec warns that all persons apprehended with fake permits will be dealt with accordingly," Matibag said.

Matibag said the fake gun ban exemption permits would jeopardize the poll body's efforts at ensuring peaceful and orderly elections.

Comelec Resolution 3328 prohibits the possession or carrying of firearms outside the residence or place of business, and in public places, including any building, streets, park, private vehicle or public transportation during the election period from Jan. 2 to June 3.

Members or officers of the Armed Forces and the PNP and other law enforcement agencies are also prohibited from carrying firearms outside their barracks, garrisons, camps, offices and other police and military installations.

The term "firearm" also includes air guns.

Exempted from the prohibition are police and military men assigned as security detail of the President, Vice President, Senate President, Speaker, Chief Justice, Commanders, Director General of the PNP and senior officers.

Also not covered by the prohibition are cashiers and disbursing officers carrying large sums of money in transport, jail guards escorting prisoners, private security guards and escorts, and any member or officer of any law enforcement agency who is in full uniform or in the actual performance of duty.

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3 killed in clash with Abu Sayyaf

JOLO, Sulu—Three government militiamen were killed and two others wounded yesterday in a clash with Muslim extremists holding an American hostage on this island, a local official said.

It was not known if the Abu Sayyaf group sustained casualties in the clash in the village of Lumapid near Jolo's Talipao town, said Talipao mayor Tambrin Tulawie.

Talipao is a stronghold of the Abu Sayyaf, where the rebels held dozens of foreign and local hostages seized last year.

Nearly all the captives were freed after huge ransoms were reportedly paid, but Abu Sayyaf rebels still hold American hostage Jeffrey Schilling and Filipino Roland Ullah.

Government troops have been on the trail of a group of Abu Sayyaf rebels believed led by Galib Andang and Mujib Susukan following a military assault on a rebel lair in the area on Friday.

At least three soldiers were killed and about 22 others were critically wounded, Tambrin told reporters.

Susukan and Andang, alias Commander Robot, were reported to have raised millions in dollars from ransom payments paid to the hostages last year.

"We need to tell the AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines) not to stop the standing military operation in Jolo. We need to wipe them out," Tulawie said. *AFP*

SMC brought in Irish beef despite ban, Romulo confirms

By Clarissa S. Batino

FINANCE Secretary Alberto Romulo yesterday confirmed that Monterey Foods Corp., a subsidiary of San Miguel Corp., brought in Irish beef into the country last year despite a ban on importation of meat from Europe ordered by the Department of Agriculture.

In a press statement, Romulo said Monterey Foods brought in an unspecified volume of Irish beef through the Cebu Port on Nov. 24 and Dec. 8 last year.

Monterey Foods is practically wholly owned (98 percent) by San Miguel Corp., now controlled by Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco, a crony of ousted President Joseph Estrada. San Miguel also owns Campo Carne.

As early as September last year, the agriculture department had ordered the ban on fears that meat from Europe could be infected by the mad cow disease, which infects both humans and animals.

The finance chief, however, stressed that the Irish beef imported by Monterey Foods were properly documented and issued the proper clearances. These allowed the beef to be released several days after entering the country.

Romulo said Monterey's Nov. 24 importation was covered by Veterinary Quarantine Clearances issued by the Bureau of Animal Industry.

"A third shipment made by the same corporation this February 2001 had been seized by BOC officers at the Port of Cebu and will either be re-exported or destroyed," Romulo said.

He said some of the meat imported from Europe were already re-exported while others were in the process of re-exportation at the expense of the importers.

Romulo said if re-exportation was not possible, the beef imports would be condemned and destroyed.

Mad cow, or bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE, had struck countries like United Kingdom, Belgium, Ireland, Italy, France, Spain, Switzerland, Portugal, the Netherlands, Denmark, Luxembourg, Liechtenstein and Germany.

Memorandum Order 19 prohibits the importation of live cattle, sheep, and goats, their meat and meat products, bovine embryo, meat and bone meal and other feed ingredients from the 13 European countries.

In humans, the disease is called Creutzfeldt-Jacob disease, which causes a slow and painful death with no known cure.

President calms public, says beef ban in place

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo assured the public yesterday that the country was free from the mad cow disease, stressing that a ban on European meat products was strictly being imposed.

Ms Macapagal's statement came after reports that customs officials had seized tons of possibly contaminated Irish beef ordered by a local meat processing company.

The report triggered a "mad cow" scare here, with demand for meat products, even local ones, falling.

Macapagal said she was assured by Agriculture Secretary Leonardo Montemayor that port and quarantine authorities had tightened security against the possible smuggling of European meat products.

"As a result of this ban, Secretary Montemayor and the Bureau of Customs were able to impound several tons of beef and bones," Ms Macapagal told a news conference.

Montemayor in a report to the President, earlier yesterday said a container van filled with frozen imported beef had been re-exported to its origin. Six other container vans, including the Irish beef seized, are to be shipped back.

"Their immediate re-export will allay the fears of the general public and ensure that the meat will not find its way into the market," Montemayor said.

The mad cow disease, also known as Bovine spongiform encrephalopathy (BSE), is a debilitating illness that afflicts the brain of cows.

Scientists believe that it could be linked to a fatal brain-wasting illness found in humans, a variant called Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (VCJD).

Latest figures in Europe show that, between 1985 and this year, there have been 82 definite and probable cases of human deaths due to the new variant of CJD. *AFP*

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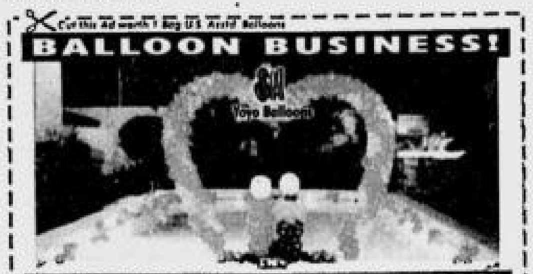

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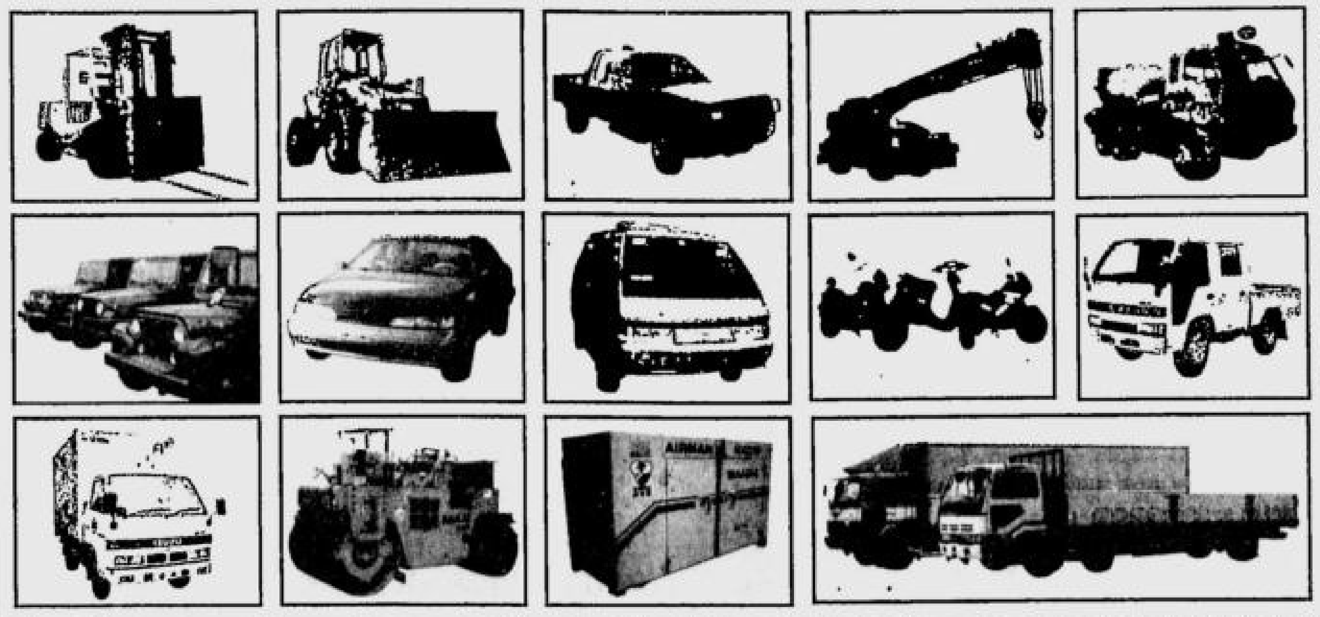

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Ping admits he has no proof vs Chavit

DAVAO CITY—Former police chief Panfilo "Ping" Lacson yesterday said he did not have the proof or the witnesses that would testify that Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson had asked "jueteng" operators to suspend operations for two months while waiting for the illegal numbers game to be legalized.

Lacson said his information came from a source who claimed to have attended the alleged meeting between Singson and the jueteng operators at the Galeria Suites in Pasig in which the legalization of jueteng was allegedly discussed.

"Well, of course we cannot surface (sic) the source because that would endanger his security. He (the source) won't agree (to testify) in the first place," Lacson said.

Singson had accused Lacson of being a "liar" and of using the governor's name to gain media mileage.

Singson also said that the Macapagal administration had no plans of legalizing jueteng.

Lacson stood by his claim that the meeting took place. "But whether or not he (Singson) stayed at the meeting to preside or just showed up and left (immediately) is another question," Lacson said. *Jowel F. Canuday, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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THE PEOPLE Power Coalition senatorial candidates raise their arms after being proclaimed at the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday: (left to right) Francisco Pangilinan, Ernesto Herrera, Wigberto Tañada, Ramon Magsaysay Jr., Roberto Pagdanganan, Joker Arroyo, Manuel Villar, Liwayway Vinzons-Chato and Juan Flavier. The candidates were joined by Bettina-Lopez Osmeña (4th from right) who represented her husband Sergio Osmeña III and Plinky Recto (2nd from right) who was there for her brother Ralph Recto. VAL HANDUMON

PPC bets hold rally at bourse

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

INSTEAD of a market rally, it was a political rally that ensued at the Makati bourse yesterday when the senatorial candidates of the administration's People Power Coalition were "proclaimed" right on the trading floor.

"We are recognizing the first walkout done by the business community and that's why we're here," said Paul Aquino, the PPC's campaign director, by way of explaining the PPC sortie into the heart of the country's financial district.

Philippine Stock Exchange officials and brokers walked out the morning after the Senate's fateful 11-10 vote against opening vital evidence in the impeachment trial of ousted President Joseph Estrada. It was the first time in the PSE's history that such a walkout was staged.

Aquino, a former broker, then called the candidates and some PSE officials onstage for the proclamation.

"By virtue of the people power of PSE, I am proclaiming the PSE candidates," said Aquino.

Wearing campaign vests, nine of the PPC's 13 candidates shook hands with smiling brokers and signed autographs while their campaign staff distributed stickers, pocket calendars, fans and other campaign paraphernalia.

The campaign lasted for about 30 minutes but PSE governor Vivien Yuchengco said it did not disrupt trading.

"Trading is going on right now. It's not being interrupted," she said.

Asked if such electoral campaigns are allowed on the trading floor, she said: "I think the board doesn't know. I didn't know about it until today and I showed Joker (Arroyo) around."

Yuchengco said she was supporting the PPC ticket.

"I'm very happy that a new government is in power and I hope all the senators (candidates) of the new government will win," Yuchengco told reporters.

Candidates who showed up at the PSE were Rep. Joker Arroyo, Roberto "Obet" Pagdanganan, Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr., Sen. Juan Flavier, Rep. Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan, Rep. Ernesto Herrera and Liwayway Vinzons-Chato.

Bettina Osmeña represented her husband, Sen. Sergio Osmeña III, who was preparing for a campaign sortie in Cebu. Plinky Recto was there for her brother Rep. Ralph Recto.

Broker Marita Limlingan handed a sealed plastic container filled with bills to Arroyo, the star of the House prosecution panel in the aborted impeachment trial. She said the money was a token of support by the brokers for the senatorial bid of the Makati congressman.

Flavier made jokes about the controversial BW Resources stocks when he spoke on behalf of the candidates.

He also made a 12-0 prediction in favor of the PPC.

"It's not true that we will get 13-0. We will have 12-0 instead," Flavier said. "Twelve from PPC and the other one is Juan Flavier. So I heard that all of us are going to win and the boxing game is over."

Arroyo, who is known to suffer from stage fright, looked like he was enjoying being mobbed for his autograph and photo sessions.

"I feel like Fernando Jose," Arroyo joked.

A group chanted Pangilinan's name, another group shouted "Obet" and some male brokers had their picture taken with Plinky Recto.

Pagdanganan said Senate President Aquilino Pimentel Jr.'s negative prediction for the PPC's chances do not tally with the result of People Power II.

"I think Senate President Pimentel is wrong. The issue here is decent government that we are espousing. I don't think the people would want the rotten system back," Pagdanganan said.

In a statement, PPC campaign official Jose Rufino attacked Pimentel for being an "opportunist" who engages in "double-dealing."

"Some may say there's nothing wrong with what he intends to accomplish but coming from a Senate leader who fashions himself as an undisputed advocate of principled politics, Pimentel's actions reek of political hypocrisy and deception," Rufino said.

Rufino said Pimentel has "clearly exposed his true color" as a fence sitter who hits to gain benefits from both the administration and the opposition.

The PPC candidates were to hold a rally last night at the Sta. Ana Racetrack in Makati City with President Macapagal. The slate would then campaign in Cagayan de Oro and Iligan on Friday, also with the President.

Comelec OKs 'bonafide' candidates

By Gerald Lacuarta

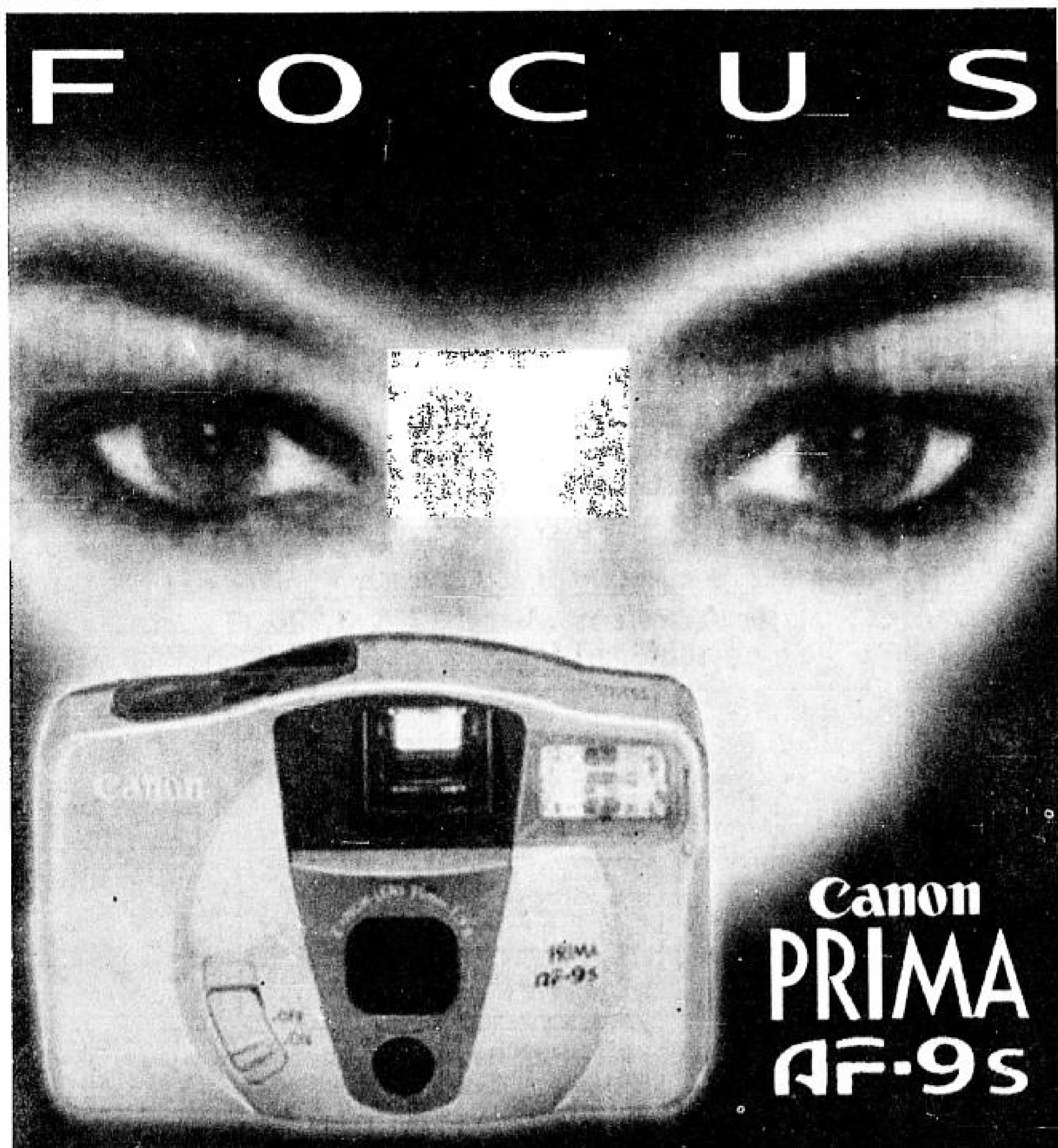
THE COMMISSION on Elections last night approved the candidacies of 34 senatorial aspirants out of the 67 who beat the deadline for the filing of candidacies on Feb. 2

The approved candidacies were those of reelectionist senators Sergio Osmeña III, Franklin Drilon, Ramon Magsaysay Jr. and Juan Flavier; congressmen Ralph Recto, Wigberto Tañada, Ernesto Herrera, Joker Arroyo; former Bulacan Gov. Roberto Pagdanganan, lawyer Francisco Pangilinan, former Internal Revenue Commissioner Liwayway Vinzons Chato and former Economic Planning Secretary Solita Monsod, all of the People Power Coalition.

Approved candidacies from the opposition were former executive secretary Edgardo Angara, former PNP chief Panfilo Lacson, former press secretary Ricardo Puno, former presidential adviser on children's affair Jamby Madrigal, Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile and Ombra Tamano.

Also approved were the candidacies of independent candidates Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago, former defense secretary Orlando Mercado, former first lady Luisa "Loi" Ejercito, broadcaster Noli de Castro, former sweepstakes chief Manuel Morato, former Securities and Exchange Commission chair Perfecto Yasay, former Sen. Santanina Rasul, former immigration commissioner Homobono Adaza, broadcaster Rod Navarro, Sen. Gregorio Honasan, and lawyer Camilo Sabio, president of the Philippine Constitutional Association.

From the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan were broadcaster Melchor Chavez, lawyer Oliver Lozano, Juan Casil and Norma Nueva.



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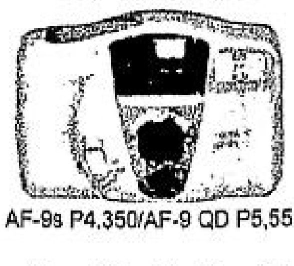

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Manila Water

Twenty four-hour water interruption in Quezon City due to major pipe improvement project

Duration: 10:00 pm, Thursday, March 1, 2001 up to 10:00 pm, the following day, Friday, March 2.

Reason for Cutoff: A section of a large 1050-mm pipeline line will be replaced at the interconnection of the Tandang Sora/Batasan line with the 1200-mm discharge line of the Balara Pumping Station in Katipunan, Quezon City. Replacement of this line will enable the Balara Station to push more supply towards key water expansion projects in the Quezon City area.

Areas that will be affected are the following:

Old Balara: Ayala Heights; Alpha Village; Hobart Homes; along Commonwealth Ave from T. Sora to North Suzuaregi; along Luzon Ave. (including Intramuros Village and North Susana Village) and along Tandang Ave. from Commonwealth to Bagatua Compound.

Pasong Tamo/Tandang Sora: Miranilla; Philand Drive; Capitol Green; Violago; Carmel III, Rosalia; EJAP Village, Violago; Gloria I; St. Joseph; San Pedro 1, 2, & 3; Pleasant View, Pilarville; Matville; St. Dominic 6 & 4; along Visayas Ave. from Congressional to Tandang Sora and along Himlayan Road (including Jem 2, Marcel, Villa Corina and Troy).

Culiat: Kalaw Hill; Tierra Bella; Tierra Pura; Villa Ferenze; Tierra Evelina; Tierra Verde; Doña Faustina 1 & 2; Sunville; Interville; Cenacle Drive; Cassanova Drive and San Antonio UP Professors.

Low water pressure to no water will also be experienced along Roxas District, Scout areas and Heroes Hill.

Manila Water will deploy mobile tankers to the affected areas during the period. Coordination for this water rationing scheme will be done through the barangay and homeowners association officials in the said areas.

Residents of the affected areas are advised to store enough water for their use prior to the schedule of the water interruption.

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February 28, 2001 – Inquirer

Sending malicious text messages punishable, NTC commissioner warns

By Anthony O. Alcantara

THE NATIONAL Telecommunications Commission has said it will go after cellular phone subscribers sending malicious or obscene messages to protect the public from abusive text messages.

Newly installed NTC Commissioner Eliseo M. Rio Jr. on Monday said the issue was one of his most urgent priorities.

"I hope to make texting a more responsible activity. People get the impression that they can transmit whatever they want through texting," said Eliseo, a retired brigadier general who is also a noted electronics and communications engineer credited with making scientific discoveries and inventions.

These malicious text messages could be traced and the perpetrators punished, said Eliseo, adjudged the best military intelligence group commander of the Armed Forces in 1991.

Eliseo said transmitting or spreading malicious and obscene messages was punishable under Section 24 of Department Order No. 11 series of 1950.

Just as a person can sue anyone who abuses him verbally, the NTC official said the same could be done with people who abuse others through the text-messaging medium.

He said a person who received an abusive text message should go to the complaint centers of the NTC and report the incident. Every region in the country has a complaint center.

The complainant would then have to show the cellular phone bearing the text message so that the number of the sender could be identified. An affidavit documenting the complaint must also be submitted.

The NTC would then have the cellular phone company send a text message to the sender saying that if he did not report to the NTC within a certain number of days to explain his side, the service would be temporarily disconnected.

"I don't think it would affect the industry. There will surely be due process here and the public will know that they can be punished for sending these messages. Freedom of speech is not absolute," said Rio.

He said even forwarding malicious and obscene text messages was illegal.

The NTC will meet with representatives from cellular phone companies today to get their views on its latest plan. Globe Telecom and Smart Communications have said it would be difficult to regulate text messaging because of the sheer number of text messages passing through their networks.

However, Eliseo said the NTC's simple plan would serve as enough of a deterrent.

"We do have the technical means to regulate it," he said.

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* November 28, 2000 : 10 Alcatel Talk & Text
* December 28, 2000 : 10 Mitsubishi Trium
* January 28, 2001 : 10 Motorola T-2288
* February 28, 2001 : 10 Nokia 5110
* March 28, 2001 : 10 Panasonic GD-30
* April 28, 2001 : 10 Nokia 3210

CONSOLATION PRIZES: 50 Professional Camera Bag, 50 Photographer's vest, 50 Solid Gold T-Shirt with collar

4. GRAND DRAW: MAY 28, 2001 - 30 CELLULAR PHONE (5 Units per above mentioned model)
1) 5 units of Alcatel Talk & Text
2) 5 units of Mitsubishi Trium
3) 5 units of Motorola T-2288
4) 5 units of Nokia 5110
5) 5 units of Panasonic GD-30
6) 5 units of Nokia 3210
CONSOLATION PRIZES: 100 Professional Camera Bag, 100 Photographer's Vest, 100 Solid Gold T-Shirt with collar

Drawing of winning combinations to be witnessed by the DTI representative to be held at the office of Solid Triangle Sales Corporation.

5. Winners may redeem their prizes at SOLID TRIANGLE SALES CORPORATION, 101 Greenrich Mansion Lourdes St., cor. Pearl Drive, Ortigas Center, Pasig City or at any participating dealer's store. WINNERS SHOULD BRING AND SURRENDER THE WINNING NUMBERED FILM BOX. For *Provincial* winners, winners shall present winning film box to nearest outlet. The manager shall advise Solid Triangle Sales Corp. to send prizes of winner/s. Winner/s can come back two weeks after to claim prize upon surrender of the winning film box.
6. All Monthly & Grand Draw prizes should be redeemed not later than 60 days from the end of the promo.
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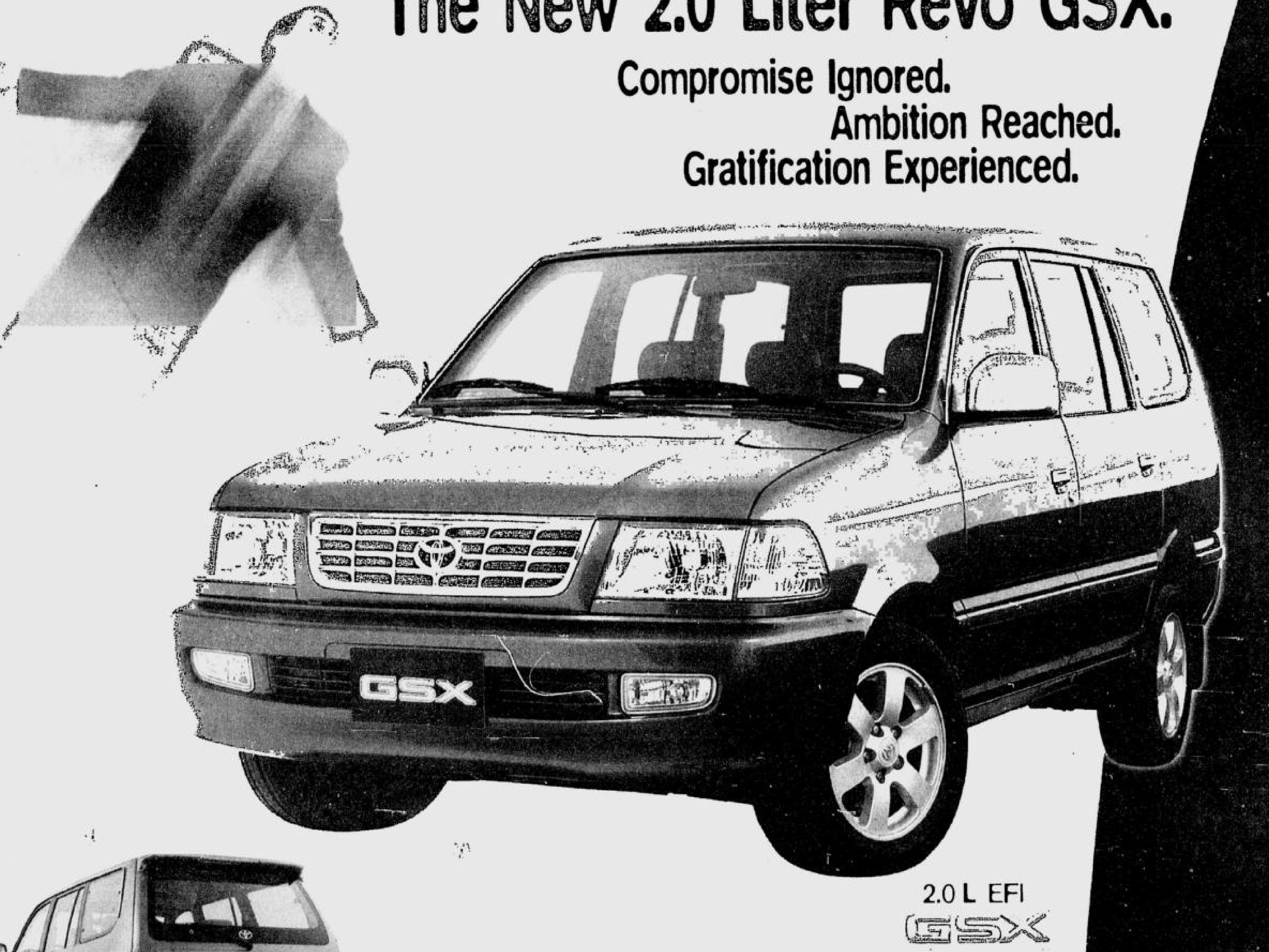

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Maddening

EDITORIAL

THE REACTIONS of government officials to growing public concern about the possibility that the mad cow disease may have reached our shores can be confusing, if not maddening. The Department of Health has certified that beef being sold in the Philippines is fit for human consumption since no live cattle or frozen meat is being imported from any of the 13 European countries where the mad cow disease has been detected.

But how can the DOH be so categorical in ruling out a mad cow disease infestation? True, not a single case has been reported locally of a human being or animal afflicted by the disease. But as the World Health Organization office in Manila has pointed out, it is impossible to determine the number of people afflicted with the human variant of the disease since systematic surveillance is being carried out in only a few developed countries. In other words, the fact that no cases have been reported here does not mean no one has ever been afflicted by the disease.

Neither can the DOH say with absolute certainty that beef and beef products available in local markets are safe. The department itself has admitted that it does not have the equipment needed to detect the presence of the disease, which is also known as bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), in meat sold in the local market. Besides, the importation of live cattle, meat and meat products was banned by the Department of Agriculture only on Nov. 19, 2000, weeks after the outbreak of the disease was reported in a number of European countries. In the two-year period before the ban was imposed, the Philippines imported a total of about 35 million kilos of beef and beef products from 10 countries in Europe. And even with the ban in place, there remain questions about how well it has been followed by importers or enforced by the authorities.

Two big shipments of frozen beef consigned to Monterey Foods Corp. were reportedly released late last year despite the ban on European meat imports, while a third was held by the customs office in Cebu. An officer of Monterey's customs broker said the two shipments, which were released in November and December, were brought to a Monterey storage facility.

Curiously, those shipments were sent to Cebu although Monterey's meat processing plant is located in Cavite. Another puzzler is that it was the Philippine Association of Meat Processors Inc. (Pampi) that denied that Monterey ever accepted the two beef shipments from Ireland. Francisco Buencamino, Pampi executive director, said Monterey promptly canceled the two shipments following the issuance of the prohibition on importation by the agriculture department. On the other hand, Monterey took out newspaper ads that said in part that it had stopped importing and accepting delivery of beef from Europe and was sourcing its beef from Australia and South America.

Seeking satisfactory answers to those questions would be a good start for the DOH officials who are investigating the case. And while they are at it, why don't they also find out why some big supermarkets are still selling corned beef and other meat products from some European countries?

More important than finding out if the ban on beef importation from Europe had been violated is determining whether the mad cow disease has broken into the Philippine food chain. It is not an excuse to say we don't have the equipment to determine if BSE has infected local cattle. A way must be found to acquire that equipment soonest. As Dr. Ronello Abila, chief of the National Veterinary Quarantine Service, put it, thorough testing is the best defense against the disease. We should not wait until the already small cattle population is decimated or, worse, some Filipinos suffer and die of the disease to find out if indeed it is already here.

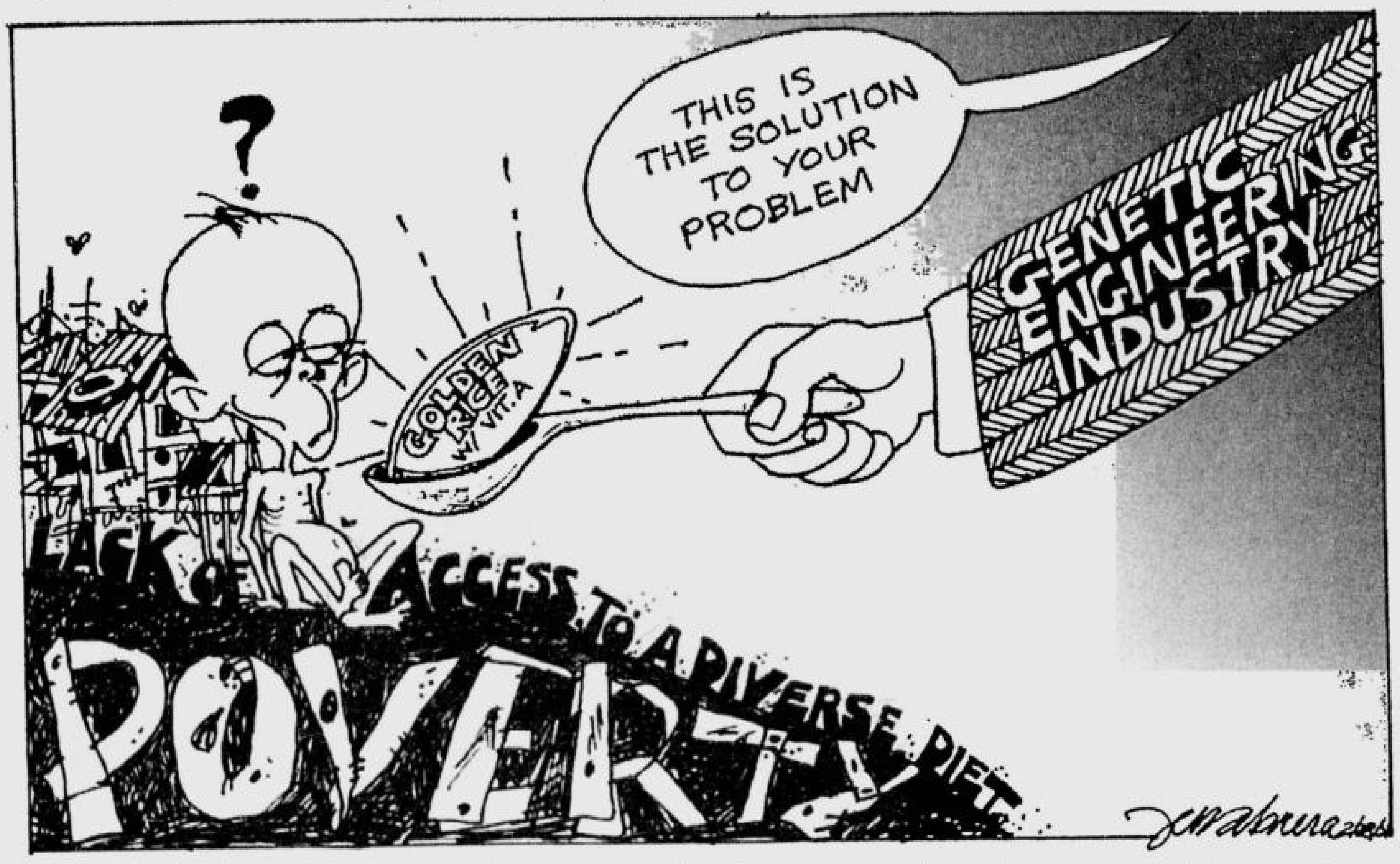
A useless debate

FOREIGN COMMENT

IT'S so telling of former President Bill Clinton—of his administration and himself, and everything about him—that he's out of office a month now and still grabbing more than his share of the national attention, thanks, again, to one of his more questionable acts.

While President Bush can rather succinctly offer why the United States and Britain needed to bomb Iraq last week, Mr. Clinton goes on and on, 1,700 words in all, on the op-ed page of The New York Times in defense of what still may well be indefensible—his pardon of fugitive financier Marc Rich. Some of what the former president says doesn't constitute new or enlightening ground in a debate that's most noteworthy because it's taking place at all. It's well-established, for instance, that the Constitution gives the sitting president what Mr. Clinton describes as "broad and unreviewable power" to issue such pardons.

The Albany Times-Union (Albany, New York)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Does SC need 30 days to find out who the president is?

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

MANY people can't understand why the Supreme Court needs 30 days to decide the very urgent issue of who is the president, Gloria or Erap. Every day that uncertainty remains contributes to the instability of the government and the economy suffers. Among many others, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines has asked the tribunal to resolve the presidency question now. Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. is being pestered by the press about it, forcing him to reply that the high court would decide on it "soon." How soon is "soon" is anybody's guess.

But remember that the Supreme Court is composed of old people who must not work too hard and too long and must take their daily siestas to preserve their frail health. So it is not known for quick actions and decisions. What it can do today it leaves for tomorrow—or 30 days from today. Or even many months and years from now. It has set deadlines for all courts, including itself, to decide cases but because it is "supreme" and there is no higher court to chastise it, the Supreme Court violates its own rules on deadlines. (Now you know why the wheels of justice grind so slowly.)

Still, the issue before the tribunal is very simple: Is Erap still the president or not? In giving the Ombudsman a 30-day injunction not to file criminal cases against Erap, is the Supreme Court saying it needs 30 days to find out who the president is? Is it saying it needs 30 days to find out what the people already know?

As *consuelo de bobo* to us laymen, it is not only us who are puzzled and infuriated by the slowness of our magistrates, but also their brethren in the legal profession: the practicing lawyers. For example, the Organization of United Solicitors for Truth and Estrada's Resignation (Ouster), has issued a statement to the press that it is bewildered by the 30-day reprieve from arrest and prosecution given to Erap. Does the tribunal need a whole month to find out who is our president? it asked.

"Who is that person in Malacañang that the people in their sovereign capacity have installed and recognized, that the House of Representatives, the Senate, the Chief Justice, the plenipotentiaries and heads of state of foreign nations have recognized as Philippine president? President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has been hailed as commander in chief by all the branches of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and all law enforcement agencies over and over, and she has all but filled up her Cabinet.

"Is the Supreme Court saying that there is a probability that the person in Malacañang is not the president, that the Senate we have now is a guerrilla Senate, that the House of Representatives is a rebel Congress, that Vice President Guingona is the vice president of a nation of rebels, that the community of nations worldwide are aiding and abetting a rebel government?" the Ouster statement asked.

"Can the Supreme Court tell the people that they had not overthrown Estrada and that Macapagal is not the president, and expect to be obeyed by the people? The issue is not justiciable. The Supreme Court cannot tell the people to undo what they have done. It is a political question. (There is a doctrine in constitutional law, the political-question doctrine, that questions that should be decided upon by the people in their sovereign capacity is a political question, and that courts have no jurisdiction to rule upon.) In the case of Lawyers League vs. President Aquino (GR No. 73748, 73972, 73990, May 22, 1986), the Supreme Court held that the legitimacy of the Aquino administration is not a justiciable matter. It reiterated this ruling in Saturnino Bermudez (GR No. 76180, Oct. 24, 1986) where petitioner asked the Supreme Court to interpret and say who the 'incumbent president' referred to in the Constitution was. The Supreme Court dismissed the petition and reiterated its previous ruling. Nevertheless, it ruled on the merits just to resolve whatever doubts there were as to the legitimacy of the Aquino administration.

"In the words of Justice V.V. Mendoza during the oral argument last Friday (Feb. 16), addressing Estrada Counsel Rene Saguisag: 'You mean to say the Supreme Court could have issued an injunction to stop all those people on Edsa from massing up? Could the Supreme Court have issued a mandamus to compel the military to revert its support for Estrada?'

"The Supreme Court, to resolve any doubts as to the legitimacy of the present government," Ouster said, "can rule on the merits by saying that Estrada has been forced to resign by his loss of authority to govern a people that had overthrown him (if it wants to use the resignation theory) or that Estrada had been overthrown by the people in their sovereign capacity, as what happened to Marcos and as ruled by the Supreme Court in Lawyers' League vs. President Aquino, supra."

Ouster added the tribunal does not need an entire month to know what the people already know. It can rule in two weeks from the oral arguments last Friday.

"What do you call 1,000 lawyers at the bottom of the ocean?" it asked. The answer is "A good beginning. Lawyer-bashing jokes are popular because they are seen to be the only source of relief from the obliviousness of lawyers to historical reality. It is hoped we do not have to drown 1,000 lawyers to have a good beginning."

Signature folly

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

THE LETTER of Blanche Gallardo et al. that came out on the letters section last Monday typifies the reaction of people to Miriam Defensor-Santiago's utterances in a TV interview a couple of weeks ago. I've been deluged by similar letters by irate Filipinos here and abroad. Asked what she thought of the people who had been excoriating her, she replied that she thought little of them. If a professor of hers at Harvard had questioned her legal standpoint on Erap, she said, she would be mortified and at pains to explain it. But coming as the buzzing was from "anonymous little insects," she wasn't bothered at all.

The brickbats that have come her way anew are not undeserved. There *was* a time when Santiago's cheekiness was cute, the time when she used to claim to eat death threats for breakfast and call her enemies fungus-faced. Unfortunately—for her—that time is gone. The tartness has been replaced by bile, the sting by poison, and all you see is a once promising public figure who did not live up to the promise, a nearly once and never future president.

This country does put a great deal of premium on education, and raises educated people on a pedestal. "*May pinag-aralan*" is how we put it. But the same phrase carries with it much expectation. People who have *pinag-aralan* are supposed to behave with civility, grace and respect for other people. They are most certainly not expected to show rudeness, arrogance and foulness, which are traits we expect from people *na walang pinag-aralan*. Santiago may have gone to Harvard and to the Mary Hill Theological School, but she won't qualify in most Filipinos' definition of *may pinag-aralan*.

While at that, the people at Mary Hill were aghast when I kidded them last January during the height of People Power II when I spoke there that they were at least partially responsible for her. Oh, they said, but she never graduated from them. She took up studies, but never did her thesis. You wonder whether she did elsewhere. Her subsequent theses in the school of life will hardly pass muster even by the standards of Fatima.

There *is* much to be said for the folk wisdom that goes by the phrase *may pinag-aralan*. I really do not know how to translate it. It does suggest someone who has gone to school. We Filipinos also put a great deal of premium on academic credentials and hang diplomas and medals on living room walls and put academic citations on top of embroidered TV sets. And we do have a great deal of respect for professionals—"*magbuhay* professional," as Ogie Alcasid and wife's ad puts it—which are what you become when you walk away with a degree from college. But I don't know that that is all the phrase says. Its expectations of civility and tolerance must suggest something more, something akin not just to knowledge or academic excellence but to judiciousness and wisdom. These are things you get not just from the classroom but from the streets, not just from the universities but outside of it. Life is the greatest school of all, experience is the greatest teacher there is. I should think the phrase "*may pinag-aralan*" encapsulates those things too.

At about the same time Santiago said what she did on TV, I was also telling an interviewer that I did not graduate from college. I studied at the Ateneo—not UP, though I know more UP people than Ateneans—and dropped out of school during my last semester. I said I wasn't encouraging that option for the youth of today. Different times, different challenges. My own time was a time of activism, and the challenge of trying to build a new world as we saw it drove many of us to drop out of, or get expelled from, school. We didn't do so because we scorned education or studies. We did so precisely because we valued education and studies. We thought we would find them outside the classroom—and we did. I know the activists of my time were a most studious lot. They rarely went without a book in hand and were constantly discussing ways of changing the world with the ponderousness of youth.

I've never regretted my decision to leave school. And to this day, I do think the horde that did so in my time became far more educated than their counterparts who stayed in school, earned a lot of letters after their names, and became lawyers and politicians, or worse, both. They became more *may pinag-aralan* than those who merely thought of themselves and their future. Indeed in more ways than we can possibly think, or thank, enough. Many of them did not live to see the fruits of their labors, perishing in the hills during martial law and after. Many more lived only to see a bitter harvest. But they did get to learn—and practice—the true essence of education. Which is to use knowledge for the betterment of the community, which is to use learning to leave a better world for the children.

It went by one dictum, which I fully embrace and go by even now: serve the people. I've always thought that was what being educated really meant, that was what *may pinag-aralan* meant. It has nothing to do with degrees. Degrees are merely a means to an end. It is not merely inward-looking, an accumulation of facts in the brain to spit out at the appropriate moment; it is outward-flowing, a bestowing of wisdom and generosity upon the world at every moment. I myself would not particularly care what my philosopher teacher thinks of what I have been writing but would care the world what my readers think of it. Learning is only as good as one practices and extends it. To think that only the opinion of your teachers matters, that is not to have learned from them.

Each time I hear people boast about the schools they've been to, while little showing the effects of it, I'm reminded of those among us who like wearing signature or branded clothes. The expensive items do not always improve their looks. They often only make them look worse, by emphasizing the contrast between the wearer and the worn. People who do this miss the point of style, which has nothing to do with brands or signatures but with doing most with the least that one has. It's the same thing with education. The expensive schools people go to do not always improve their stature. They often only make them look worse, by emphasizing the contrast between their height of academic achievement and their depth of ignorance. People who do this miss the point of learning, which has nothing to do with schools but with doing the most for the least of one's fellows.

You're foolish, signature schools will only help you commit signature follies.

Wanted: another kind of people power

COMMENTARY

Asuncion David Maramba

I DO not really care what the foreign press says about Edsa II. Only somebody in the midst of such a gripping mass of humanity and only a Filipino can fully understand or feel it. Edsa I and Edsa II were electric, genuine and awesome and that's that.

But I agree with one point that outsiders raise, although not necessarily for the same reasons. I don't want another Edsa because:

"Edsa" might deteriorate into a bad habit, a quick fix for any discontent, or a tool to throw out any official because he has done something that angers us or is prejudicial to our personal interests.

And frankly frightening is the possibility of people power, aped by a real mob. A description almost as good as motor-mouth Miriam's "little insects" and "inferior life forms," was John Silva's "rent-a-crowd sporting more tattoos on their arms than teeth in their mouths...flashing malnourished arms and tubercular bodies showing they were worth every peso." Instinctively I drew back from such a sight on TV fearing for its outcome. Wasn't it rumored that Joseph Estrada would step down "on Wednesday" when a manufactured people power would have been mustered?

"Institutionalize people power," by all means; but let's also have another kind, a "day-to-day Edsa" that will make Edsa III unnecessary. Let's crystallize a citizen watch that will no longer allow corruption, ineptitude or deceit to get all out of proportion before we notice that its perpetrators have become big, fat thieves and glaring liars.

But let's get concrete. Whom and what do we watch; how do we watch and who does the watching?

Whom and/or what to watch are there for the picking. But don't say, "we'll watch the Senate" or "we'll watch the House." That's too ambitious and ambiguous. Pick just one official—your barangay captain, or one councilor, or the mayor or your congressman. Or adopt one senator. Watch the mayor's wife or the first lady or in the present case the first gentleman. If for example the stream of visitors to his office doesn't dry up, there's something wrong.

Or choose the comings and goings of the Countryside Development Fund (read: pork barrel) of one senator or congressman—one project, one contract as they come and go; or the bills, resolutions, ordinances that one public official espouses or supports or one graft-ridden division in any department like the Department of Education, Culture and Sports that is supposed to teach our children what's right and wrong. (Secretary Raul Roco, we're counting on you!) With election heating up, the Commission on Elections should top the list for, all right, we're learning to choose the right candidate; what if the Comelec continues to condone the cheating? And sharing the top, follow the progress of the many-splendor prosecution of Estrada and let us confused citizens know whether it is moving forward or being pulled here and there. Seek and find your target.

But how do we go about it? The first vehement objector will naturally be the object of our scrutiny. Nobody wants to be monitored, least of all public officials, although it's possible to meet with a cooperative one who will actually appreciate working with his constituents. But chances are he'll say we have no right to "investigate"; or he'll graciously agree but mutter under his breath, "just try."

We need guidelines badly: what matters we can look into; how far we can go; what records or papers we can examine; if and when we can sit in on or, participate in discussions, sessions, biddings, negotiations; how public officials conceal their shenanigans; what we can reveal to the public and the like. We definitely need some knowledgeable group to formulate such guidelines available for the asking. From the very first step, we must be taught "how."

Lastly, who will do the watching? Thelma San Juan has written of a group of lunching ladies who have vowed to watch. Groups like this have great potential. Women can be very persistent and effective; so can senior citizens and retirees who compose the very able "functioning third age"; so can a clutch of concerned citizens in every community. There are of course the organizations with their preferred focuses. The battle cry should be: for every person, for every group, for every organization—an advocacy, or an adopted official.

The trouble with most of us is that we disband. Somebody sized us up thus: we all object to the political wrongs, but 80 percent of us are not organized; only 20 percent is—the extremes of left and right. That 80 percent is critical. We must stay together informally as friends; if not grimly, as cells. Nag for a Truth Commission to investigate corruption. Nag for more educational TV. Nag. With some support from media our efforts could snowball.

Our situation is much like our garbage. Many of our public officials are *trapos* and the transition from *trapo* to trash goes very fast. We have to start the segregation ourselves, in our own backyard.

Asuncion David Maramba is a book editor, a retired professor and an occasional journalist.

Are show-biz pols helping local show biz?

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

THOUGH people predicted a "backlash" against entertainers running for office, allegedly because the first actor to be elected President here had set such a bad example, even more actors, singers, comedians, has-beens and never-beens are running in this year's polls.

The situation is reaching absurd heights (or plumbing the depths) in Quezon City, where action star Rudy Fernandez is pitting himself against the speaker of the House and the son of the outgoing mayor for the post of mayor, and a sit-com cast of characters are aspiring to be councilors. No wonder the Quezon City Council passed an ordinance declaring the erstwhile capital of the country "The City of Stars." They meant it literally—a City Hall Full of Stars, or Wannabe Stars.

In reaction to the put-downs of entertainers with political ambitions, members of the industry have turned defensive. Edu Manzano, who is running for mayor of Makati, nailed it when he declared that entertainers don't have a monopoly on stupidity or dishonesty. To which one might reply, yes, but they don't have a monopoly on competence and the will to serve, either.

Certainly, lawyers can be just as amusing as clowns, doctors as deadly as action stars, economists as full of hot air as ham actors.

The skepticism regarding show-biz folk entering politics is not that they are any more prone to incompetence as others, but that they are banking on popularity and popularity alone to sweep them into office. If, during their heyday in films, on TV or onstage, they also took time to express their opinions on public issues, bravely denounced evildoers, and sought to serve their adoring public beyond signing autographs and posing for pictures, I don't think anyone would object to their jumping into the fires of public service. But to go from shooting down film villains one minute to running one of the country's biggest cities the next—that's quite a stretch. Erap at least toiled as a small-town mayor before setting his sights on the Big One—and the Big Bucks.

* * *

DESPITE the growing number of performers and other show-biz figures in politics, though, little has been done on the legislative and policy front to hasten the development of the Philippine film industry.

One would think that with three "professional" entertainers in the Senate, and a good number of former entertainers or those with links to the industry in the House, and with an actor in Malacañang, laws badly needed by the film community would have been passed with little difficulty during the Erap term.

But to this day, a relatively "simple" bill such as that expanding the coverage of the Film Ratings Board has been left stranded in legislative limbo. Other legislation, which would, for instance, have lifted some of the onerous tax burden from the movie industry, could not even get off the ground.

But the problem of the industry, plagued these days by dwindling audience share in the wake of the Hollywood juggernaut, piracy, the powerful rivalry of TV, cable and tapes/CDs, goes far beyond legislation.

A group of directors, meeting with some possible reform allies the other day, pointed out that the root of the industry's malaise is really "cultural." "The culture of silence prevails throughout the industry," remarked an award-winning director. (Come to think of it, all of them at the meeting are multi-awarded.) A colleague of his decried that the industry has all these years been run by a "mafia," with a system of patronage replacing the once-powerful studio system.

* * *

THE SAME names, the same faces, many of whom are not even actively involved in film production, have seemingly staked a lifelong claim on leadership positions in the industry, notably the Film Academy of the Philippines.

Conceived as an "umbrella" organization of various guilds composed of film workers, the FAP has proven largely inutile in championing the interests of the industry, as shown by its miserable failure to ease the tax burden imposed on local movies. And yet, the FAP leadership, through a system of accreditation and black listing, can determine whether a director can make another movie, or an actor to be cast in a future film.

Though its members are some of the most articulate, thoughtful, colorful and opinionated individuals, the local film community has remained strangely cowed by this oppressive situation. Another director offered an uncanny insight: The way Erap ran his government, like a two-bit gang lord, simply reflects the way the movie industry was and is run by its leaders. Come to think of it, Erap was one of local filmdom's Big Chiefs.

* * *

ENTERTAINERS cropping up like mushrooms on the plain of Philippine politics, even as the industry that nurtured them dies a slow death, would simply be ironic, even amusing, if it wasn't happening against the backdrop of events in the rest of the film world.

While the lucrative film markets of the West are being swamped by movies from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, even Iran, Filipino movies are struggling to keep their local audience. More local movies are now circulating in prestigious film festivals abroad, but these are lonely, pathetic efforts compared to the campaigns being waged by other governments to promote and market their films.

"We come with our little flyers and posters, and what do we find at these festivals?" asks one director fresh from a European sojourn. "We find that other countries have booths, with thick programmes on 'The Films of Poland,' or 'Movies from New Zealand.' In contrast, we work *kanya-kanya*."

If only an honest-to-goodness body, free from the pressures of partisan politics, could work with government funds to focus on the export and development of Philippine films, the industry could even spur an economic take-off, they believe.

So if any show-biz candidate were still looking for a platform, here's a plank ready for polishing and earnest pushing.

Confusing the students

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

A FEW weeks back I was invited by the UP College of Education to read a paper on "The Teacher as Mediator of Culture" but then I gave a presentation on my classroom experience as a teacher who is a mediator of confusion. As a student and as a teacher I have seen the effects of formal education. I teach because I have experienced how education sometimes closes the Filipino's mind. I think that the inspiration to all knowledge and culture has always been a sense of wonder. If a teacher can instill a sense of curiosity in a student, that student will learn by himself or herself for the rest of his life. Without wonder, all human thought is as stagnant as a history textbook. I teach history, one of the most dreaded subjects in school topped only by algebra, because it is a challenge. I know that the warm bodies on the seats were forced to take the class. I know my students would rather be doing other things than learn about Jose Rizal and the emergence of the Filipino nation, but then how do I turn them around and impart what I know? First, I have to open their minds to create a vacuum that will contain what I think is important for them to know, and I do this by controlled confusion.

On the first day of class I always give a diagnostic test to see how far my students are willing to go in order to learn. I have a list of deadly questions to choose from such that I do not repeat in about four years. One question I inflicted on my UP students was: What is more important in a donut, the part you can eat or the hole? Someone reported me all the way to then UP president Jose Abueva who fortunately shared my frustration with the way students (and many teachers) enter a classroom with minds shut. While there is no right or wrong answer here, one has sown the seeds of confusion that makes people think in a non-linear way.

The donut is almost a philosophical question because donuts are meant to be eaten and of course the important part is the part you can eat, but then some students answered that if it does not have a hole then it is not a donut. This leads others to counter that Dunkin Donuts sells donuts without holes. We can even go further because Dunkin Donuts actually sells what comes from the hole of a donut and these are called munchkins. The (w)hole range of experience comes in and only in UP have I been given outrageous but valid answers like—"It depends, if you are hungry then the part you can eat is important, if you are on a diet the hole is more important." My all-time favorite—"The hole is important because it is the part you DONUT eat."

Only in Diliman and Loyola Heights have I found students willing to engage me in bouts of confusion. Students who survive entrance exams in the best universities have an IQ of at least a hundred. And if they are not dumb they flunk because they are lazy. One can demand performance. But then why is it a challenge to teach history? Students come to class all ready to memorize, all ready to vomit—undigested—anything I will give them in my lectures. Some students write down anything that proceeds from a teacher's lips. My technique for undivided attention is to have them put away all their cell phones and notebooks. Tests are another problem I have also seen over time that most students (despite the whining and complaining) would rather take an objective test than an essay. It is easier to answer 1+1=2 rather than be asked to explain why 1+1=2 and not 1+1=3.

While it takes a lot of preparation to dish out controlled confusion, I think it is a method that arms students for lifelong learning—give or take a few who will be confused for life no matter what you do—the point is to make the students doubt everything they have been told—even from the teacher. They must learn to validate from their own research anything that is fed them.

Who killed Lapu-Lapu? Smart aleck answer, *ang kusinero* (bow). After the laughter everyone stops to ask how on earth did Lapu-Lapu die? Old age? War? Disease? Frankly, nobody knows. This leads us to my other diagnostic question—Who discovered the Philippines? Standard textbook answer is Ferdinand Magellan. From here I sow confusion to make a point about history, context, meaning and interpretation.

How can Magellan discover the Philippines when there were people there? Can we say that Filipinos or whatever they were called before we became Las Islas Filipinas, discovered the Philippines? In my own discipline I have seen two great historians grapple over this point of confusion with no resolution. Gregorio Zaide says Magellan "rediscovered" the Philippines and Teodoro Agoncillo reacted that this was hogwash and his textbook merely refers to the "discovery" qualified by quotation marks. When I write my own history book I will not bother about discovery or rediscovery. I will simply say Magellan *arrived* in the Philippines in 1521. The facts have not changed at all but the interpretation—a whole way of thinking and looking at the world—changed with one simple word.

Confusing students may not be pedagogically sound but man copes with confusion—settling the unsettling that simple process is the culture of learning.

* * *

Comments are welcome at ambeth@admu.edu.ph

Ten-point pro-OFW agenda

COMMENTARY

Jeremaiah M. Opiniano
Institute on Church and Social Issues

THE COUNTRY'S overseas employment program has long been battered and bruised. And while President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has made "national healing" her theme of governance, overseas employment needs a major surgery in order to offset the risks Filipinos face because of migration.

With the appointment of former Civil Service Commission chair Patricia Sto. Tomas as the new labor secretary, it is the season for setting new agenda for the country's labor sector. On Feb. 10, the Senate committee on labor, chaired by Sen. Gregorio Honasan, presented an extensive report bearing recommendations for the administration's labor agenda. President Macapagal, however, did not promise the report's framers that all of their proposals will be followed.

Quite ironically, overseas employment receives little mention in the report. It noted that the overseas Filipino workers, though not included in the country's labor force, is a significant clientele of the Department of Labor and Employment. Overseas employment, the report added, has become "a valve for the country's unemployment problem."

Regulating overseas employment by the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency has "become very difficult," the report said. The committee recommended that the State should focus on studying the hazards of foreign work, safeguarding Filipinos from them, preparing OFWs for such hazards by having onsite welfare services, and reintegrating the OFWs in the local labor market.

Unfortunately, the congressional report offered little by way of migration policy reforms, and what it does offer will continue to give our so-called "modern-day heroes" more bruises that may be hard to cure. More effective reforms have long been batted about but government seems lacking in political will to effect them for the protection of our contract workers and migrants.

Sto. Tomas, who was the first administrator of the POEA, and Economic Planning Secretary Dante Canlas will review the contents of the report. While that is being done, civil society groups are calling on President Macapagal and her cohorts to consider their pro-OFW agenda.

One of those civil society groups which is presenting a pro-OFW agenda for the new administration is the nine-member Philippine Migrants' Rights Watch (PMRW). The network, formed in 1995, is composed of five NGOs and POs and four Church groups which work for the protection of the rights of OFWs and Filipino migrants.

The network has prepared a 10-point agenda for Ms Macapagal and her experts in the overseas employment program to consider:

(1) "Clear-cut" policy declaration on overseas employment and national development. Government says that it does not promote overseas employment, but the phenomenon continues, and government is perceived to encourage it. Government, the PMRW said, must define its policy and plan of action for national development, in particular local employment generation and human resources development. If it will not rely on overseas employment, there must be concrete steps toward more sustainable alternatives.

(2) Clarification of amendments to RA 8042 (Magna Carta for OFWs and Filipino Migrants), particularly the provision on deregulation. Deregulation of overseas employment will not redound to better protection of OFWs. Deregulation, the PMRW believes, is sensible and effective "in an environment where there is perfect information available to OFWs and prospective migrants, and where overseas migration is taken as an option."

(3) Certification of pertinent bills. Among these bills are the amendments to the Magna Carta for OFWs (particularly the provisions on money claims, illegal recruitment, deregulation, economic and social reintegration), the Absentee Voting Bill (or allowing migrants to practice their right of suffrage), amendments to the Foreign Service Act (that will enjoin our embassies to serve the interests of Filipino nationals overseas), and the Anti-Trafficking Bill (which aims to curb trafficking of women and children). Sadly, these bills have not really moved forward in the past sessions of Congress.

(4) Prioritizing the plight of Filipino seafarers. The country's seafarers may seem to be incomparable in numbers as compared to the land-based workers. But these over 200,000 merchant seamen have made the Philippines the top source of seamen worldwide. These crewmen, however, are prone to tribulations like blacklisting, low wages and insurance benefits, registration of seamen and maltreatment from abusive foreign shipowners.

(5) Implementation of gender-sensitive concerns and approaches. With the rising feminization of migration, government has not operationalized gender-sensitive policies and programs affecting female migrants. The women are employed in domestic and entertainment work, and are vulnerable to trafficking.

(6) Pursuit of bilateral and regional agreements. The PMRW said the State must pursue these arrangements in order to ensure the protection and upholding of Filipinos' welfare and rights.

(7) Interventions for the welfare of migrants' families. While government has provisions that directly affect the migrant workers themselves, policymakers should also consider the needs and vulnerabilities of migrant families.

(8) Reintegration programs for returning migrants. This is the weakest area in the country's overseas employment program, the PMRW said, as these programs' effectiveness and reach had been limited. Without reintegration measures—both economic and social—for returning migrants, they may have little future.

(9) Pension plans and other related protective measures for migrants. While OFWs contribute significantly to the Philippine economy they cannot avail of assistance and benefits like social security loans, health care benefits, and pension/retirement benefits. Such measures will at least help the OFWs reintegrate themselves in the greater society.

(10) Involvement of migrant civil society groups. While RA 8042 duly recognized the role of NGOs in protecting Filipino migrants, current state mechanisms do not welcome NGOs.

It has been over 30 years that the Philippines has been exporting labor and exposing Filipinos to the pitfalls of overseas employment. Administrations have passed and the adversities Filipino migrants face—both here and abroad—have not been substantively checked.

The country's overseas employment programs have long been in need of remedies. The OFWs could only hope that the Macapagal administration may be the one that can heal the long standing wounds.

THEY SAID

By his works

"Popoy Lagman was a controversial figure, but his work and his activities for which he earned the ire of many, lent vigor, valor and added meaning to the Philippine labor movement."

—Labor SecretaryPatricia Sto. Tomas

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LETTERS

Gov't should seek debt relief

THE GOVERNMENT is saddled with a huge budget deficit. The surest victims of this deficit will be the ordinary people as budget for social services is the first to be cut. Coupled with the privatization policy of the previous administrations, social services by the government have continually shrunk. Early on, the Macapagal administration is showing signs that it is following this road. Just a week ago, the President announced no salary hikes for the ordinary government workers. Prices of cooking gas have increased.

After Edsa II, the rich should not go home with the "business as usual attitude," while the poor go back to their shacks, with less money for food, education for their children, etc. Let us share the burden, so that we can really share the peace that must ensue after Edsa II.

For starters, the government must initiate a campaign to get debt relief. This will free a lot of our budget for social services instead of tying up almost 40 percent of our budget (since 1987) in debt servicing.

President Corazon Aquino went to the US Congress in 1987, and without being asked by the financial institutions, promised to religiously pay our foreign debt. But Poland got an almost 100-percent debt relief (of its $40-billion debt) some years back with the support of the Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church should mobilize its Edsa people for this end, armed with John Paul II's two documents ("Solicitudo Rei Socialis" and "Tertio Millenio Adveniente") which condemn the international financial scheme as immoral. With the international goodwill that Edsa II has created, asking our creditors not to demand payment for our debt in full is not much to ask for. It only needs political will and moral suasion from the new administration to do it. May it not waste this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, the way Ms Aquino wasted it. With some political will, PD 1177 (the automatic appropriations law) can be repealed. But who among the senatorial and congressional candidates of the People Power Coalition are pushing for this?

Second, business people are one in saying that the economy is again on the right track. But instead of just promising benefits to the workers later, the rich people who run the economy and the middle management people can do better. They can immediately raise the ordinary workers' pay by simply cutting their huge salaries and perks.

Preposterous! Yes. But all this talk about peace, reconciliation and unity will mean nothing if we let this gap continue to widen.

Lastly, to put substance into all this talk about peace, reconciliation and unity, Ms Aquino should once and for all implement real agrarian reform in Hacienda Luisita. And Agrarian Reform Secretary Hernani Braganza can follow this up by redistributing the other big landholdings of the Cojuangcos and others.

The year 2001 is very important. It is the start of the new millennium. The Macapagal administration can simply follow the jubilee admonition: return the land, release the slaves, rest the earth, reclaim the feminist principle and (the poor people's) return to (their original) property. As Leviticus says: "If you will follow these, you will live peacefully in the land that I will give you." If these things happen, the words "no more walls, no more chains" will be sung in the hearts of everyone.—**ARCY M. GARCIA, Kilusang Jubilee, 2019 Cadena de Amor St., Barangay 174, Camarin, Caloocan City**

Vote and vote well

AS we commemorate the glorious event in Edsa in 1986, I would like to think that what has occurred in those sacred grounds twice had not been futile. Now, we must prove first to ourselves then to others that indeed democracy is alive in our country, not only during times of political turmoil but also during times of peace.

In order for a nation to have a true democracy, the people must actively participate in the political process and one way of doing this is through the ballot. It is also a way for us to express our will and a means of instigating social change.

As the campaign season commences, we must start evaluating each candidate. We have experienced and learned the hard way the consequences of our votes. This time, we must be more careful and responsible voters.

For candidates who have already served as public servants, we must start reflecting and asking ourselves what they have accomplished. Have they espoused truth and integrity? Were they able to go beyond partisan politics? Have they acted on the platform of government they presented when they were campaigning?

For politicians just entering the political arena, let us ask questions like: What is their background? Are they capable of running the government? Are they morally upright? What is their platform of government?

I call on everybody to cast their votes in the May election. More than a right, voting is a responsibility.

To my fellow youth, who have proven to be a dynamic force in our political milieu, I especially appeal that we go out and vote. Let us vote for those who reflect our ideals and let us make our choices well. We must not forget that the turnout of the election would certainly alter the course of our lives. Our future depends on this.

In Edsa, a covenant was made between the government and our people. As we expect good governance from our leaders, we must also do our part and participate in this political exercise.—**MICHELLE VILLA-REAL BASMAYOR, JB2-201 Hardin ng Doña Aurora, UP Campus, Diliman, Quezon City**

Estrada's conviction vital to government

AS the Filipino people are scandalized by the plunder wrought by the all-consuming lust for more money of the previous administration, we all pray that President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo pursues with greater speed and resolve the justice and retribution that deposed President Joseph Estrada so richly deserves.

The moral ascendancy to the presidency of Ms Macapagal hinges on the success of having corrupt officials who plundered the wealth of the nation convicted and placed behind bars.

The lessons of South Korea should inspire our leadership when that nation did not spare their former presidents from the justice their misdeeds as public officials deserved.

Should the new administration be able to accomplish this with Estrada at the soonest possible time, this should be a sterling landmark in our nation's odyssey toward authentic political maturity.

Estrada behind bars for his monumental plunder should be the centerpiece of Ms Macapagal's campaign for a real moral order in our society.

The message of this desired phenomenon in our justice system should have its downstream impact on all public officials down to the lowest echelons of our bureaucracy.

Likewise, the daily extortionists on the road personified by policemen, barangay officials and tanods should follow the moral discipline sought and instituted by Ms Macapagal.

Ordinary mortals like us, with our feet of clay, far from the corridors of power in Malacañang or Congress can only pray fervently that this new moral order be firmly planted in our very souls, convinced at last that no one is above the law in our country.—**VIC T. DEL FIERRO JR., president, Coalition 349, c/o Coalition for Consumer Protection and Welfare, 104 Gaiety St., Annex 18, Better Living Subd., Parañaque City**

Saguisag's less traveled route

WHEN Rene Saguisag left politics, it was for good. He wanted to devote his time exclusively to the pursuit of the noble profession that is (aside from wife Dulce and family), his all consuming passion—law. His recent acceptance of ousted President Estrada's case, though painful to those who knew him, was not at all out of character and proves that he has indeed burned all his political bridges. We remember that he has always taken up the cudgels for lost and unpopular cases, such as former Calauan Mayor Antonio Sanchez's Statement of Assets and Liabilities case and the Hubert Webb murder case.

Saguisag, like the true lawyer that he is, is trying his best to prove the merits of his case and exploring the threshold of the legal system. For this effort, Filipinos should give him the chance and his day in court, that he deserves. Here is one man who never succumbed to fear or pandered to favor, in his long and lonely march to the beat of a different drummer. No one can accuse him of having made hay in any administration, least of all, the disgraceful Estrada presidency. Even the short-lived stint of his wife Dulce in the social welfare department was more of a career appointment, than a political one. It is common knowledge that she has risen from its ranks as a professional social worker. His belated presence in Malacañang before Estrada's departure was more of a humane and Christian gesture, as he did not even consider himself a close friend of the beleaguered *anak ng jueteng*.

He has turned down several key positions in the past, because he did not want to compromise any of his principles—*balat sibuyas* or not. Now that he has embarked on another seemingly controversial case, let us withhold judgment until such time that he has done what his brilliant mind intends to do. Then, as now, he is taking the road less traveled, and we should let him complete the journey, no matter how disconcerting it is for the rest of us.—**NENET GALANG-PEREÑA, 58 USA corner Thailand Streets, Better Living Subdivision, Parañaque City**

May polls should affirm GMA's presidency

MAY I humbly add my two cents' worth of opinion regarding the current constitutional crisis.

After all the hair-splitting is said and done, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo remains the only legitimate President of this confused nation.

But it would have been better and less controversial if the ground for Ms Macapagal's presidency was the doctrine invoked in the American Declaration of Independence:

"...That they are endowed by their Creator certain inalienable rights...life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That whenever government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it..."

As People Power I was affirmed by the 76-percent approval of the 1986 Constitution so shall People Power II be affirmed this coming election by the victory of most of the candidates of the People Power Coalition.—**ANTONIO AMANTE, 2370 Nacar St., Manila**

An election debate: Monsod vs Santiago

ONE of the best methods of crystallizing issues during an election is a debate among the contending candidates. This is most effective on a one-on-one discussion.

For starters, I respectfully suggest an all-women cast, i.e., Solita Monsod vs. Miriam Defensor-Santiago. This should be carried live on radio and TV. Tickets should sell faster than a PBA championship or even the Super Bowl. How about that?—**ARTEMIO T. ORDINARIO, M.D., professor, University of Sto. Tomas, España, Manila**

Accident waiting to happen

WHEN the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System was privatized, many hoped that it would provide efficient service to the public. That hope was disappointed at Talon, Las Piñas City recently.

Probably, under its expansion program, the MWSS wanted to provide Barrio Talon with water service. In pursuance of that program, diggings were done, apparently to lay down the big water pipes.

Unfortunately, the diggings from the corner of Angela and Real Streets, going in the direction of Alabang, have been left open for more than two weeks already. This has posed a danger to life and limb to the public who use the road at all times of the day or night. Truly, the whole situation is an accident waiting to happen.—**FACUNDO S. TALLO, 6 North 1st St., Angela Village, Talon, Las Piñas City**

Bush faces first major test with Tuesday speech

NEWS ANALYSIS

Ron Fournier

WASHINGTON—President George W. Bush goes before the United States Tuesday night with his first major challenge: sell a program of tax cuts that Americans are lukewarm about and spending cuts that many won't like.

It would be a tough assignment for any president, but this new leader has hurdles all his own. Elected without a clear mandate, Bush gets only middling marks for his public speaking, has yet to build enough support in Congress and has had to make his arguments heard in the midst of the din over the Clinton pardons, a spy scandal, a White House shooting and an air strike against Iraq.

"Hopefully, all the focus on the past is over with," the president said at a Cabinet meeting Monday. "It's time to move forward and (Tuesday) night's speech is part of moving forward."

The cornerstone of the joint address to Congress will be Bush's pitch for a $1.6-trillion tax cut over 10 years. He is buffeted on all sides—from Democratic partisans who say it's too big, Republican activists who say it's too small and voters who put a higher priority on debt reduction and certain spending programs.

Bush must convince voters they can have it all: lower taxes, lower public debt and bigger budgets for education, environment and other popular programs.

"With a $5.6-trillion (budget) surplus, we do have room for a lot of options," White House press secretary Ari Fleischer said Monday.

Bush rarely stressed debt reduction on the campaign trail, in part because his massive tax-cut package didn't leave room for reducing red ink under economic conditions at the time.

But surplus projections have ballooned. And the Congressional Budget Office estimates that up to $800 billion of the $3.4 trillion in publicly held debt cannot be retired in the next decade because it is in savings bonds or treasury bills that do not come due soon or are held by foreign governments.

Bush will be able to promise the fastest, largest debt reduction in history: $2 trillion over 10 years, aides said Monday.

Countering claims that cherished programs will be sacrificed for tax cuts, Bush will highlight an 11 percent increase at the education department, doubled funding for the National Institutes of Health, preservation of the Social Security and Medicare funds and full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund—the last a $900 million commitment.

For every budget increase, Bush must trim spending for other programs in order to limit growth to his goal of 4 percent. That could expose Bush to the same tactics Democrats used against Ronald Reagan in the 1980s, when they highlighted cuts that hit voters closest to home.

Democrats are already accusing him of slashing money for the homeless and reducing police programs.

"All Democrats want a tax cut, but it should be one that's fair to all Americans and must be part of a responsible, honest budget that balances all the priorities important to American families," said Democratic chair Terry McAuliffe.

With all these challenges, Bush has little room for error.

"The tax cut is the foundation of the Bush presidency," said GOP consultant Scott Reed. "He needs to show that his agenda will help Republicans govern the country, and it starts with tax cuts."

"If he can't show that he can get things done," Reed said, "the wheels will start coming off."

Bush dismissed a suggestion Monday that his task was made harder by the disputed nature of his election victory. "We've worked hard here in this administration to reach out to people that may not have supported me," he said.

AP

History repeats itself

THE PEOPLE of Mindanao are very lucky indeed because the top three officials of the land are from that region. They are President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo who grew up in Iligan City; Vice President Teofisto Guingona, who is from Misamis Oriental and Senate President Aquilino Pimentel Jr., who also hails from Misamis Oriental.

Here's a bit of history: In 1961, our President was Diosdado Macapagal, his Vice President was Emmanuel Pelaez who is also from Misamis Oriental. Forty years later, the President is another Macapagal, Cong Dadong's daughter Gloria, and her Vice President, Guingona, is also from the province of Misamis Oriental. A case of history repeating itself.—**PAUL R. MORTEL, MBLA Court, Malanday, Marikina City**

Sotto is a performing senator

I WOULD like to take exception to your editorial dated Feb. 20 naming Sen. Vicente C. Sotto III as a member of the "committee on silence and non-performance" in the Senate.

I have personally worked with the senator since 1992 and it seems to me that the conclusion in your editorial is a product of lack of information and is most unfair to him. Contrary to your statement, Sotto has been doing his work in the Senate, at present, as chair of the committee on public services and former chair of the committee on science and technology as well as assistant majority leader, without fanfare and publicity.

His record as a lawmaker speaks for itself. He served as assistant majority floor leader and chair of the committees on local government and tourism in the Senate. During the Ninth and 10th Congress, he also chaired the following committees: youth and sports development; illegal drugs; and rural development. He was the principal author/sponsor of 61 bills enacted and signed into law which sought the conversion of a number of municipalities into cities such as Makati, Muntinlupa and Parañaque among others.

Upon his reelection in this 11th Congress, he has filed 190 Senate bills and 36 Senate resolutions addressing diverse and varied issues affecting our country. As the former chair of the committee on science and technology, he also worked for the passage of the "Year 2000 (Y2K) Compliance of 1999." As the present chair of the committee on public services, Sotto sponsored the passage of the Seatbelts Use Act of 1998 in addition to the 15 franchise bills enacted into law vital to our economy's thrust forward. At present, there are 28 enrolled bills sponsored by his committee awaiting presidential action.

His committee has also conducted hearings on controversial issues involving the public services sector. Furthermore, as part of his work in this chamber, Sotto participates in bicameral conference meetings, which deliberate on the provisions of bills emanating from both houses of Congress.

As the present assistant majority leader, Sotto is often tasked with directing the proceedings and debates on the floor in the absence of the majority leader, as well as presiding during sessions when the Senate president leaves the session hall.

Recently to complement his hands-on experience in public service, Sotto enrolled in and completed the Executive Program for Leaders in Development at the Kennedy School of Government at the Harvard University.

Thus, may I reiterate that contrary to your impression, Sotto performs and will continue to perform his work in the Senate pursuant to the mandate bestowed upon him by the people.—**MYRA M.D. VILLARICA, chief of staff, Office of Sen. Vicente C. Sotto III**

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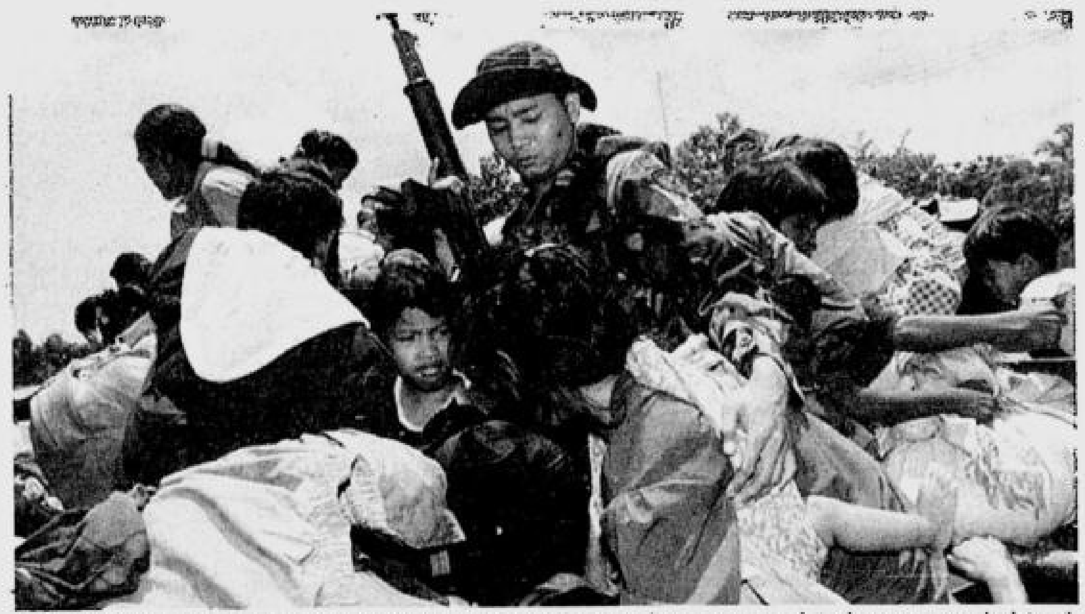
Death toll rises in Borneo massacre



A SOLDIER rushes Madurese refugees as they fight to be accommodated on a crowded truck evacuating them from violence-wracked Sampit in central Kalimantan on Borneo island. AP

JAKARTA—The unofficial death toll in Indonesia's ethnic bloodletting in Borneo yesterday rose with newspapers reporting the discovery of about 118 fresh corpses.

The reports came on top of at least 400 deaths logged by the official Antara news agency at the weekend in massacres after indigenous Dayaks turned on migrant Madurese in the Indonesian part of the island.

The Jakarta Post newspaper quoted police as saying that 118 bodies had been found dumped outside a local government office on Monday in Parenggean district, 100 km from Sampit, focus of more than a week of ethnic violence.

The newspaper said the dead were believed to be Madurese refugees fleeing Sampit in Central Kalimantan province for the provincial capital Palangkaraya, where many of their kinsfolk took refuge.

The leading Kompas daily said the 118 were killed on Sunday, the same day top security officials were inspecting the region.

Officials were not immediately available to comment.

The Central Kalimantan massacres have been among the worst bloodshed to hit Indonesia, a giant archipelago straddling the equator and racked by three years of political upheaval and economic collapse.

Thousands of refugees, bringing a few belongings and grim stories, have fled south by ship to the city of Surabaya in Java and just across from their homeland, Madura island. *Reuters*

WORLDBRIEFS

Suu Kyi wants dialogue

RANGOON—Burma democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, in a meeting with a US official, has reaffirmed her commitment to holding a peaceful dialogue with the ruling military regime, a US diplomat yesterday said. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Ralph Boyce met with Suu Kyi at her Rangoon residence on Monday. He is the first American official allowed to see her during five months of house detention that began after she tried to travel outside the capital for political work. Suu Kyi, who appeared to be in good health, told Boyce that she is committed to peaceful dialogue and hopes it will lead to national reconciliation, the diplomat said on customary condition of anonymity. *AP*

No 'mad cow accord'

BRUSSELS—The European Union's 15 agriculture ministers failed Monday to come up with a common policy on measures to contain the spread of mad cow disease, an EU official said. After some eight hours of talks, the ministers failed to come up with the needed qualified majority on measures to contain mad cow, or bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), and to rescue the EU's crumbling beef market, said the official on condition of anonymity. Some EU members, including Denmark and Germany, rejected the idea of a program of supplementary destruction of cattle, calling instead for measures favored by the Netherlands to do away with government intervention schemes such as obligatory buy-back when prices fall below a certain level, he said. *AFP*

1st war crime convict

THE HAGUE—The UN war crimes tribunal on Monday sentenced the vice president of the wartime Bosnian Croat republic to 25 years in prison for his role in a nearly three-year campaign to drive out Muslims from central Bosnia, making him the first politician to be convicted by the court. Dario Kordic, 40, and coaccused Mario Cerkez, 41, a commander of the HVO Bosnian Croat militia, were both found guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity by a three-judge panel here. Cerkez was sentenced to 15 years in prison. *AFP*

Anwar surgery still dim

KUALA LUMPUR—Lawyers for jailed politician Anwar Ibrahim applied Tuesday for a temporary practicing license for a foreign doctor to treat him, but said legal wrangles over surgery on his back remain unresolved. Sankara Nair said Dr. Thomas Hoogland from the Munich-based Alpha Clinic was "ready to fly in," but the government's insistence that the ousted deputy prime minister accept full responsibility for possible negligence during and after any surgery would impede any treatment. The government has also demanded that Anwar give a written undertaking not to seek treatment outside the government-run Kuala Lumpur Hospital, effectively denying him any chance of seeking treatment overseas, Sankara said. Anwar has rejected the preconditions. *AP*

Slur on WW II sex slaves

TAIPEI—Seeking to quell a public outrage, a presidential adviser has apologized for telling a cartoonist that many Taiwanese women had volunteered to work as sex slaves for the Japanese Army during World War II. Hsu Wen-lung said in a statement released Monday night that he spoke from his own limited experience and may have overlooked most other Taiwanese women who were forced or deceived into providing sexual services to Japanese soldiers. "I meant to say the Japanese government did not arrest the women in public," he said. "I did not deny the fact that some may have been coerced or cheated into becoming comfort women," a euphemism for wartime sex slaves. *AP*

Mori not planning to quit

TOKYO—He's hovering just above rock bottom in the polls, and reports say even his backers have decided he should go. Soon. But Japan's Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori has no intention of resigning just yet, his spokesperson yesterday said. "We humbly accept that there are some harsh opinions," spokesperson Kazuhiko Koshikawa said. "But there are important things that we must do, day by day." Mori's latest vow to hang on comes as pressure for him to resign has reached a new high. Two new public opinion polls put support for him at between 6 and 8 percent, and a major newspaper reported yesterday that power brokers within his Liberal Democratic Party have met with the heads of the party's two coalition partners to discuss when he should go. *AP*

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US wants modified sanctions against Iraq by March summit

BRUSSELS—The United States aims to rebuild consensus around a modified package of UN sanctions against Iraq in time for an Arab summit on March 27, US Secretary of State Colin Powell yesterday said.

Powell said the United States was still working on the specifics of the package, but a senior official said the idea was to ease restrictions on Iraqi imports of civilian goods while tightening the restrictions on military equipment.

"We're going to have to concentrate the controls on weapons of mass destruction items, on military goods, and release the controls on largely civilian goods," the official said.

Powell, speaking to reporters on his plane from Damascus to Brussels at the end of a three-day tour in the Middle East, said the idea was to get Arab states and permanent members of the United Nations Security Council to agree on the package.

"We get agreement and we make a judgment, and frankly we also get the support of the Arab League in a few weeks' time," he added, laying out the scenario for rapid approval.

The senior official said the target was to make progress in time for the Arab summit in Amman, only three weeks away.

He also said that in conjunction with the package the United States could lift some of the 1,600 holds it has placed on contracts which Iraq has submitted to the UN sanctions committee in New York.

Most of the holds are for "dual-use" items—goods which could have either civilian or military uses, and Powell said that the United States had been the strictest country.

But after three days hearing Arab leaders complain that the sanctions are hurting the Iraqi people, or at least that ordinary Arabs have the impression that they hurt the Iraqi people, Powell indicated he was in the mood to be realistic.

POWELL

The United States says that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has deliberately failed to take full advantage of the UN oil-for-food program because he gains politically from publicizing shortages of food and medicine in Iraq.

Iraq's propaganda success has become particularly troubling in Washington since Palestinians rose in revolt against Israeli occupation and Israeli-Palestinian peace talks collapsed.

"The message I have consistently heard is that overdoing it with sanctions gives him (Saddam Hussein) a tool that he is using against us and that really is not weakening him," Powell said, referring to his talks with Arab leaders in Cairo, Amman, Kuwait, Riyadh and Damascus. *Reuters*

Naughty caption hurts royal family

MUNICH—The German ambassador was summoned by Japan's foreign ministry after a top German newspaper published a picture of Japanese Crown Prince Naruhito with a joking caption questioning his fertility.

The Sueddeutsche Zeitung's weekly magazine supplement on Friday ran a cover picture of the prince and his wife with the words "Tote Hose"—literally "dead trousers" and slang for "nothing happening"—printed over the prince's groin.

Japan's foreign ministry complained, saying the royal family was a symbol of the unity of all Japanese and the article had hurt the feelings of the royal family and the entire nation.

The highbrow Munich daily said it would apologize.

Japan's foreign ministry expressed regret over the incident and said it hoped it would not harm relations. Ambassador Uwe Kaestner agreed the article was extremely regrettable but said it was not a matter for the government.

The magazine headline ran "The World's Oldest Monarchy Is on the Brink of Extinction" and an inside story, published on the prince's 41st birthday, recounted the couple's lack of an heir for the imperial throne. *Reuters*

Taliban orders historical Afghan relics destroyed

KABUL—An organization set up to protect Afghanistan's war-ravaged heritage yesterday called a Taliban order to destroy all statues, including two towering 5th-century statues of Buddha, a "tragedy."

"It is a great loss, a tragedy for the Afghan people and for the world," said Italy's ambassador to Pakistan Angelo Gabriele de Ceglie before leaving the Afghan capital of Kabul.

De Ceglie was in Kabul representing the Society for the Preservation of Afghan Culture and Heritage, a largely Italian-funded organization, which was established to try to preserve what remains of Afghanistan's heritage ravaged by more than 20 years of relentless war.

It suffered a major setback Monday with an edict issued by Afghanistan's supreme leader, Mullah Mohammed, Omar ordering the destruction of all statues, including the two giant ancient Buddhas, saying they were offensive to Islam.

Afghanistan's ancient Buddhas are located in Bamiyan, about 125 km west of the Afghan capital of Kabul. One Buddha, measuring 53 meters, is said to be the world's tallest statue in which Buddha is standing up rather than sitting.

The smaller is 37 meters tall. The two statues, which have been damaged in fighting in the area, were carved out of the Afghan mountainside in the 5th century.

"This is a historical treasure, a cultural heritage that belongs to the world," said de Ceglie.

The government of Sri Lanka, a majority Buddhist nation off the southern tip of India, expressed "grave concern" yesterday about the order.

"If true, this is a very serious matter and we are gravely concerned," said Sri Lankan government spokesperson Ariya Rubasinghe.

Other Afghans also expressed outrage at the Taliban order.

Hamid Karzai, a former deputy foreign minister in the ousted government of Burhanuddin Rabbani, said the statues are no longer a part of religion, but are now a part of the country's heritage and history, like the tombs of Egypt's ancient Pharaohs. *AP*

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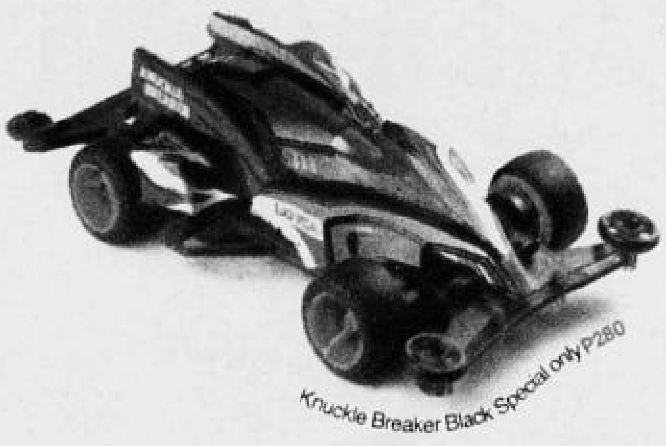

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Peru tries for woman president

LIMA—When Lourdes Flores and her presidential campaign entourage entered Lima's noisy garment district, it was mostly women who pushed through the throng to greet her, exclaiming, "Our time has come!"

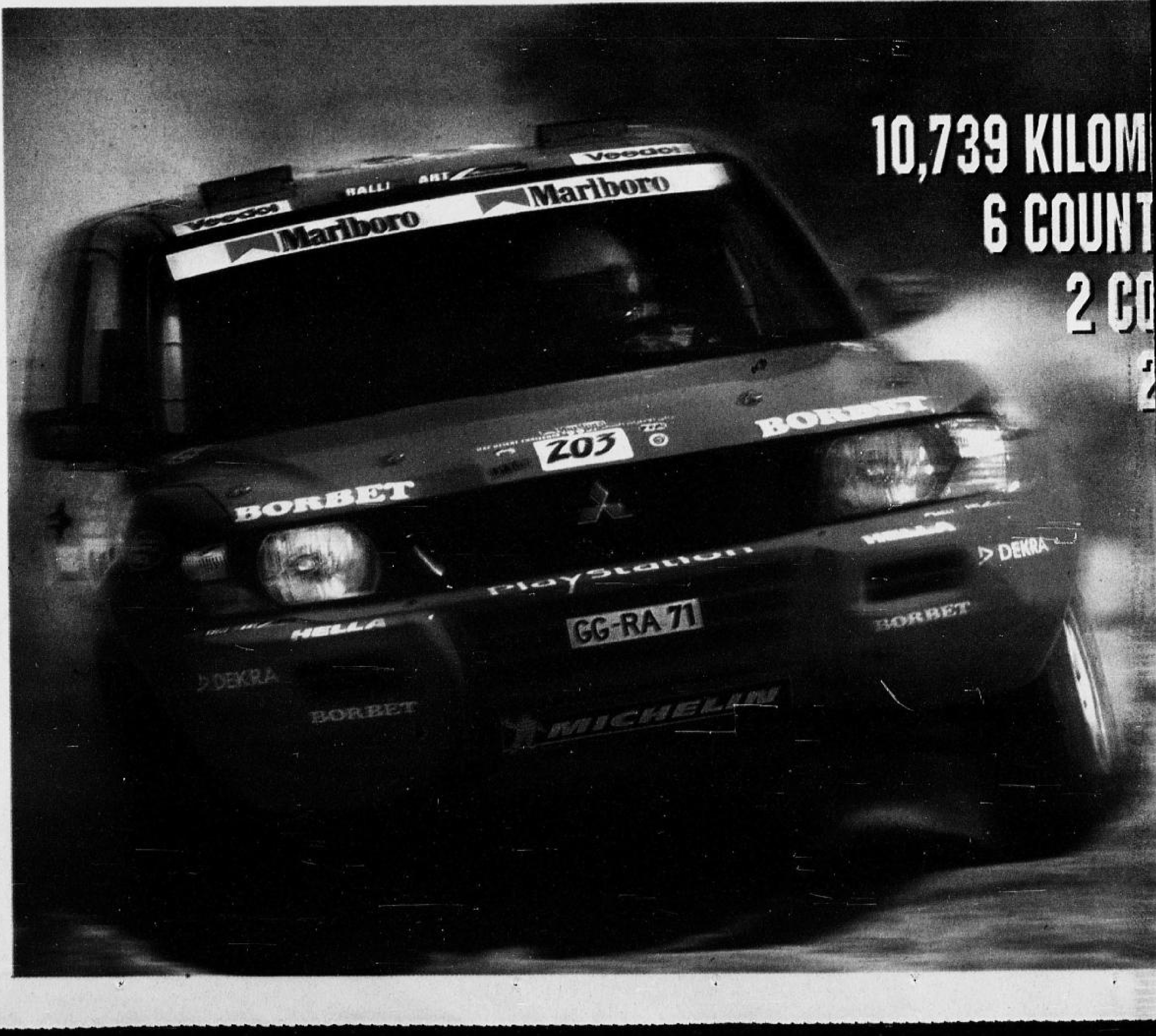
"She's a good woman, the woman who is going to move us forward, because the men can't be trusted," said Magda Acuna, 50, who sells shirts and slacks. "They rob. They're corrupt. Women are more honest."

Flores, a former representative for the right-of-center Popular Christian Party, has been a leading opponent of disgraced ex-President Alberto Fujimori. Now, in the upheaval following Fujimori's ouster in November, Flores has suddenly surged to a near tie with frontrunner Alejandro Toledo in polls ahead of April 8 elections.

With none of the eight candidates likely to win outright, some polls predict Flores will defeat Toledo in a runoff.

"In this time of crisis and hope for change, many men who perhaps would normally exclude a women are saying, 'Let a woman govern,'" Flores said in an interview. Analysts say her gender helps.

Peru is enduring the sour aftertaste of videotapes showing Fujimori's spy chief, Vladimiro Montesinos, buying political favors with bribes to an array of election officials, lawmakers, military chiefs, businessmen and media heads. *AP*



Rich visited White House night before Clinton pardon

WASHINGTON—Denise Rich, former wife of fugitive financier Marc Rich, visited the White House with Democratic fundraiser Beth Dozoretz the night before former President Bill Clinton granted her ex-husband a pardon, sources said on Monday.

Denise Rich, whose donations of more than $1 million to Democratic causes and $450,000 to Clinton's library fund have raised questions about the pardon, visited the White House at least 13 times during Clinton's presidency, the sources said.

The final visit came in the early evening hours of Jan. 19, just hours before Clinton granted the controversial pardon to Marc Rich on Jan. 20, his final day in office.

Dozoretz, a friend of Clinton's and the former finance chair of the Democratic National Committee, told congressional investigators on Monday that she would not testify at a hearing on the pardon.

Like Denise Rich earlier this month, she cited her constitutional right against self-incrimination in refusing to appear before the house government reform committee.

The panel, one of two congressional committees examining widening allegations of influence peddling and possible illegal payments linked to the pardons for Rich and others, had subpoenaed Dozoretz to appear at a hearing on Thursday.

Dozoretz was recruited by Marc Rich's attorney Jack Quinn to lobby Clinton on the pardon, and Quinn has testified to Congress that she spoke to Clinton at least twice on the issue.

"Because of the pendancy of other investigations, Ms Dozoretz, upon advice of counsel, has elected to invoke her constitutional privilege not to testify," her attorney, Thomas Green, told the House committee in a letter.

The US Attorney's office in New York is conducting a criminal probe into Clinton's pardon of Rich and his partner Pincus Green, who fled to Switzerland 17 years ago to avoid prosecution on more than 50 counts of racketeering, wire fraud, income tax evasion and illegal oil trading with Iran.

Investigators are looking for links between the pardon and donations from Denise Rich, who gave more than $1 million to Democratic causes and $450,000 to help build Clinton's proposed presidential library.

House investigators have searched White House visitor logs obtained last week to determine when and how often Denise Rich, Dozoretz and others visited the White House in the final weeks and months of Clinton's presidency.

The parallel congressional and criminal investigations have expanded to cover allegations about other pardons, including charges that Clinton's half-brother Roger lobbied on behalf of at least a half-dozen close friends who did not receive pardons.

Also being investigated is a $400,000 fee given Hugh Rodham, lawyer brother of former first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, by the families of two men he represented who did receive clemency.

Sen. Clinton, a New York Democrat, said last week she was unaware of the payments to her brother, which were subsequently returned. *Reuters*

RITES FOR PEACE REUTERS

A woman performs a traditional ritual during a rally by commanders of the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) in Tehuantepec in the Mexican state of Oaxaca, Feb. 26. The group's leader, Subcommandate Marcos, began a two-week march to Mexico City Feb. 26, in a caravan for peace accompanied by helicopters and police.

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Korea families find it hard to recognize who's who at reunion

SEOUL—Chung Du Yung, a prominent music composer in North Korea, yesterday bowed deeply on the floor before a makeshift altar for his late father and broke down in tears.

"Father, I wish you had lived longer," 66-year-old Chung sobbed in a hotel room as he clutched a framed photograph of his father, who died seven years ago. His 92-year-old mother, Kim In-sun, sat beside him, wiping away tears with a handkerchief.

Chung was one of 100 visitors from North Korea who traveled to Seoul on Monday for three days of reunions with relatives whom they had not seen since the 1950-53 Korean War. The same number of people from South Korea went to North Korea for similar reunions.

After group meetings a day earlier, Chung met his mother and four brothers and sisters in private Tuesday. Reporters were allowed to briefly witness some of the individual reunions.

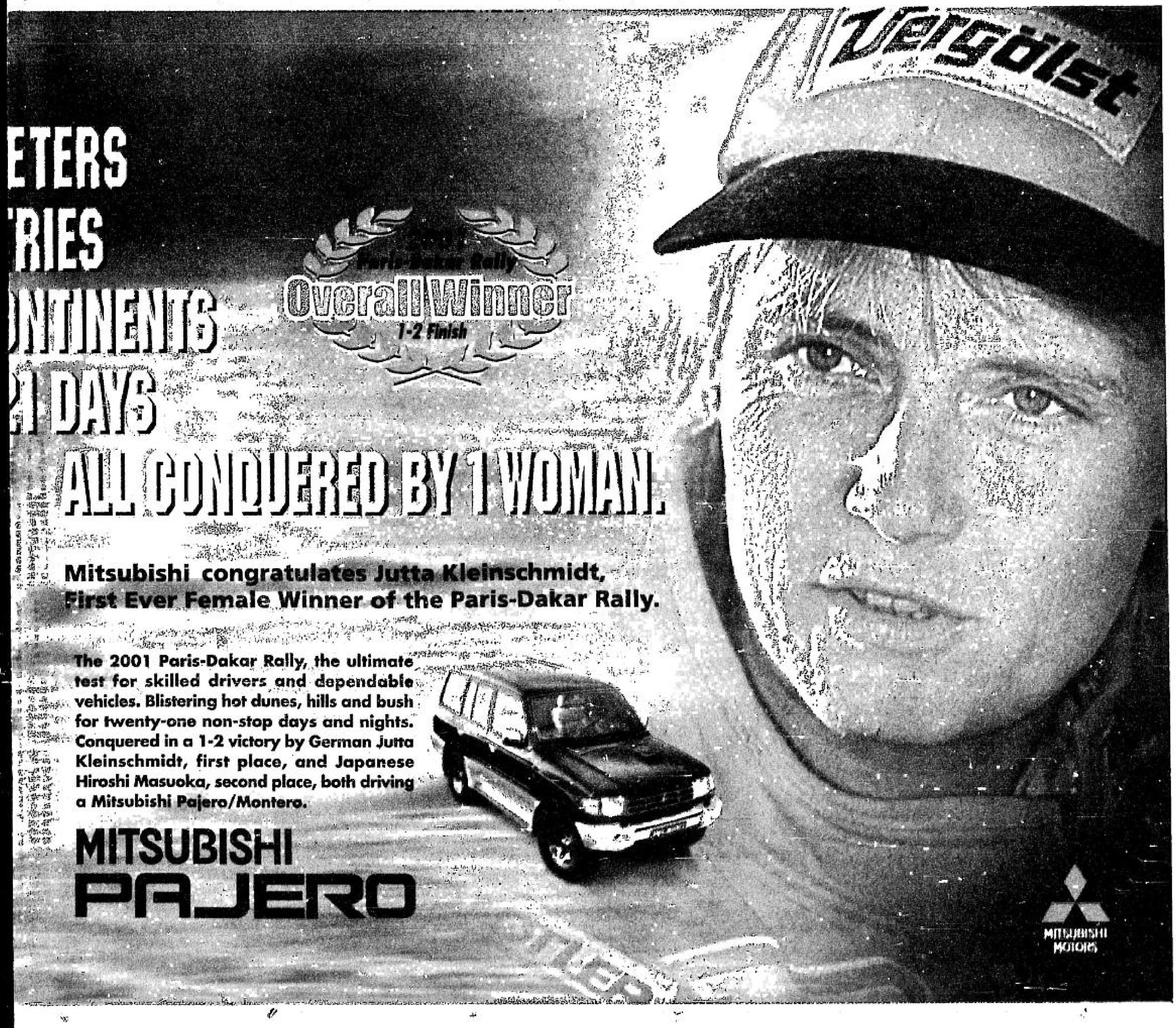
Chung was a 15-year-old high school student in Seoul when he was conscripted into the North Korean Army. He was unable to contact his family before he was sent to the frontline.

In the North, Chung became a noted composer. His musical works include "Ode to Gen. Kim Il-sung," which is dedicated to the late founder of the communist country.

Kim Il-sung died in 1994, and his son Kim Jong-il then took over, ruling with the same absolute power and personality cult that his father enjoyed. Like many other visitors from North Korea, the bespectacled composer lavished praise on Kim Jong-il, calling him a "bright lodestar who will shine on the homeland forever."

The political grandstanding in Seoul triggered a shouting and shoving match after one Northern visitor showed a photograph of Kim Il-sung to his mother.

A South Korean official intervened, saying the North Korean was violating a deal between the two governments that prohibited political displays or comments. *AP*



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Flash floods imperil lives of 200,000

MAPUTO—Mozambican rescue teams prepared to evacuate some 200,000 people threatened by fresh floods as the government appealed for more boats and aircraft to bolster the relief effort.

Environment Minister John Kachamila said the government was concentrating its efforts on moving some 34,000 people from the danger zones of Marromeu in southern Zambezi River valley, by the sole helicopter available, boats and trucks.

"The main concern is still Marromeu. I think the water will probably flood in Marromeu so contingency measures are still being taken," Kachamila told reporters after visiting the central provinces of Sofala, Manica, Zambezia, which have been hardest hit by the flooding.

"Starting from tomorrow we will try to evacuate people by road from Marromeu," he said.

Kachamila and disaster management authorities said more than 600 people had so far been evacuated from the town of Mopeia, in the southern part of the Zambezi River valley, and the neighboring district of Luabo.

They stressed however that more aircraft and larger boats were needed to get people to higher ground before a fresh wave of water from the Cahora Bassa reservoir, which is close to overflowing, hit the area in a few days. *Reuters*

Gloria's son running after all

Civil society groups' warning on political dynasty ignored

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Juan Miguel Arroyo, the eldest son of President Macapagal-Arroyo, filed his certificate of candidacy here on Monday, amid warnings from Metro Manila-based civil society groups against political dynasty.

The young Arroyo, called "Mikey" here, did not file his candidacy in person. His representative went to the Commission on Elections provincial office on his behalf to file the certificate at 10:10 a.m. Monday.

Vice President Teofisto Guingona Jr., Lakas-NUCD president, and Isabela Rep. Heherson Alvarez, secretary general, endorsed Arroyo's candidacy through a certificate of nomination and acceptance dated Feb. 5.

The 31-year-old Arroyo wrote "actor/artist" in the space for occupation.

But even until Monday afternoon, he kept members of the local press guessing, declining to confirm or deny if he had already filed his candidacy.

He said, however, he continued to get support from Pampanga mayors and members of the youth and other sectors.

Since his mother assumed the presidency on Jan. 20 and non-government organizations active in People Power II immediately resisted the emergence of a Macapagal-Arroyo dynasty, Mikey had repeatedly issued inconclusive statements on his plan to become Pampanga's vice governor.

If asked, his usual reply was: "I am still consulting with my local leaders and non-government organizations."

The President had said on national television in January that she would not meddle in her son's political plans.

MIKEY ARROYO

Vice Gov. Clayton Olalia on Monday gave up his reelection bid and announced he was giving way to Arroyo's candidacy.

Olalia's decision to withdraw from the race came as a surprise, as he had been asserting his right to the equity of incumbent in the Lakas-NUCD.

Without Olalia, the vice gubernatorial race has become a fight between two actors—Mikey and Roi Vinzon, also a Kapampangan from Mexico town.

Mikey called up Olalia on Monday to thank him for withdrawing his candidacy.

Olalia's decision came amid reports that First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo had offered him a government post if he would not run against his son in the May 14 elections. However, Olalia denied that there was an exchange deal. In a meeting here, he said several Lakas-NUCD mayors and political leaders had asked him to withdraw his candidacy for the young Arroyo's sake.

"If the Macapagal administration decides that I am capable of serving the government in other capacities, then I would gladly (accept) it and I would prefer to serve the youth," he said.

Olalia said he had met with his family and friends before he talked with Gov. Manuel Lapid and other Pampanga officials about his plan to drop his reelection bid.

Lapid welcomed Olalia's decision. "At last my problem between Olalia and Mikey is over. Mikey will be my running mate this election," he said.

"My only wish is that if the young Arroyo is elected, he should not fail to measure up (to) the expectations of our provincemates because we have suffered under the Estrada administration," Olalia said. *Tonette Orejas and Bert Basa, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will be cloudy with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. The rest of the country will experience mostly cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms.

SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila HI 32° Lo 22°	**Baguio** HI 25° Lo 14°	**Tuguegarao** HI 32° Lo 21°
Laoag HI 32° Lo 21°	**Clark Zone** HI 31° Lo 23°	**Tagaytay** HI 29° Lo 21°
Legazpi HI 31° Lo 25°	**Bacolod** HI 31° Lo 23°	**Roxas** HI 31° Lo 26°
Cebu HI 31° Lo 24°	**Tacloban** HI 31° Lo 25°	**Gen. Santos** HI 31° Lo 23°
Zamboanga HI 31° Lo 24°	**Cagayan de Oro** HI 32° Lo 23°	**Davao** HI 31° Lo 23°

Compiled by: Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research

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Church worker stages hunger strike

BANGUED, Abra—The Aglipayan church worker accused of plotting the murder of rebel priest Conrado Balweg staged a daylong hunger strike in her detention cell here last week to appeal to President Macapagal-Arroyo to release all political prisoners.

"I hope the President will be firm in her decision (regarding political prisoners) without the intervention of the military," said Lorna Rivera-Baba, who has been detained at the provincial jail here since last year for her alleged involvement in Balweg's murder.

The hunger strike coincided with the protests staged by political prisoners at the National Penitentiary in Muntinlupa City.

Baba, who was arraigned here on Monday, wrote an open letter to the President relating her situation as a political prisoner.

She asked Ms Macapagal for meaningful political reforms, the release of all political prisoners and the new administration's respect for human rights.

"The political prisoners were right when they exposed graft and corruption that was practiced by Estrada. (Ilocos Sur) Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson only hastened it. The government should note that the political prisoners became catalysts for change," Baba said.

She expressed disapproval of the possible appointment of Lt. Gen. Jose Calimlim as the next Armed Forces chief of staff because of his human rights record.

Baba was abducted by the members of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, then headed by Calimlim, on March 17 last year.

She was detained at Camp Aguinaldo for five days before she was presented by Calimlim to the media as the suspected mastermind in the Dec. 31, 1999 murder of Balweg in Malibcong, Abra.

Earlier, the Cordillera Human Rights Organization (CHRO) said the family of Baba and the other suspects in the Balweg murder have denounced Calimlim and Isafp because of their record of "abduction, illegal detention and physical violence." *Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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THE EMBASSY OF CANADA announces that effective March 1, 2001, applicants who wish to submit applications for Visitor visas, Student Authorizations, and Returning Resident Permits must contact 1(909)-101-8888 to schedule an appointment. Effective March 1, 2001, applicants for Visitors visas, Student Authorizations, and Returning Permits will no longer be able to submit their applications directly to the Embassy.

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Sex workers benefit from health program

By Aquiles Zonio
PDI Mindanao Bureau

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—A health care program adopted for commercial sex workers in this city could be the first of its kind in the country.

The General Santos City Entertainment Operators Association (GSCEOA) recently signed a memorandum of agreement with the Philippine Health Insurance Corp. (Philhealth) to provide a health care program for commercial sex workers and guest relations officers (GROs) employed in entertainment establishments here.

"We need to give them health benefits," Flaviano Roxas, the association's president, said.

Roxas, owner of Nighshift Videoke, is an active member of the local STD/HIV/AIDS Prevention Council.

The program is expected to benefit about 2,000 commercial sex workers and GROs in the city.

Last year, the city council passed an ordinance that laid down the mechanism to control, if not eradicate, rising cases of sexually transmitted diseases in the city.

City Ordinance No. 9 mandates bar owners and nightclub operators to provide health benefits to their workers.

It also requires commercial sex workers and GROs to obtain work permits and to undergo regular medical checkup to protect themselves and their customers from sexual diseases.

Poll ban delays evacuees' return

DAVAO CITY—The election ban on government infrastructure projects may further delay the return of thousands of evacuees displaced by the war in Central Mindanao and the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Undersecretary Jesus Dureza said the construction of core shelter units for the evacuees would be shelved until the Commission on Elections (Comelec) issues an exemption to the ban.

Dureza, chair of the government panel in the peace talks with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), said the government was planning to build about 2,000 core shelter units and repair about 8,000 houses damaged during the war.

Most of the evacuees have been staying in the evacuation centers for eight months since they fled their villages at the height of then President Joseph Estrada's "all-out war" campaign against the MILF last year.

Dureza said the housing projects would cost about P120 million.

"The problem is the election period. We cannot make immediate fund releases during the campaign period. Maybe we will ask the Comelec for exemptions," he said.

The Estrada administration released in December last year some P66 million to the mayors of war-torn towns for the construction of the core shelters, Dureza said.

But most of the projects are not finished and could be left as such as the mayors busy themselves during the election campaign that starts Thursday.

Dureza said several evacuees had decided against returning to their villages until their houses are constructed or repaired.

Despite the government's declaration of a suspension in military offensives, several evacuees refuse to return to their homes as some villages are still occupied, either by soldiers or MILF guerrillas.

As of Feb. 21, there were 14,021 families or 75,773 persons still staying in 76 evacuation centers, records from the Department of Social Welfare and Development and the Presidential Assistant for Regional Concerns Office (Pareco) indicated.

The evacuation centers are found in Matanog, Sultan Kudarat, Parang, Pagalungan, Barira, Pagagawan, Buluan, Pendatun, North Upi, South Upi Datu Paglas and Shariff Aguak towns, all of Maguindanao.

Dureza said the government was still finalizing its survey on the remaining evacuees in Lanao del Sur.

The DSWD and Pareco also recorded that 18,247 families or 44,201 persons remained in 49 evacuation centers in the towns of Kabacan, Matalam, Carmen, Aleosan and Pikit in North Cotabato.

Another 686 families or 2,268 persons are in evacuation centers in Marawi City.

"Do not expect dramatic exodus of evacuees back to their homes. We are still rebuilding the trust of the people," he said.

Another problem confronting the government, he said, was how to reach about 2,000 families who evacuated deep into the Liguasan Marsh for fear of being caught in the crossfire should they run to the evacuation centers.

Dureza said the Liguasan evacuees had not received any assistance from the government. *Jowel F. Canuday, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Police rescue 2 kidnapped Tsinoy sisters

SARIAYA, Quezon—Lawmen rescued two kidnap victims in Barangay Janagdong I here around 9 p.m., Friday night, a police officer here said.

Senior Supt. Charlemagne Alejandrino identified the victims as Josefina Chua and Susan Casano, both of Pili, Camarines Sur.

Another victim, Salvacion "Basyon" Tan, was earlier released by her kidnappers on the night of Feb. 22 after her relatives allegedly paid ransom money amounting to P4.8 million, he said.

Alejandrino said both Chua and Casano were shackled when found by members of the Quezon provincial police, Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force and the Camarines Sur police.

The victims were seized in Barangay Magsaysay, Naga City, by unidentified men armed with .45-cal. pistols on Jan. 30.

Alejandrino said the victims were brought to Barangay Janagdong I and held in captivity for 24 days.

Intelligence reports earlier gathered by Alejandrino's men revealed that the victims were being kept in Barangay Dalahican, a coastal village in Lucena City.

"Tan coordinated with us and it was she (Tan) who led the way to Chua and Casano," Alejandrino said.

Janagdong I is situated a few kilometers from Barangay Bignay where 365 kilos of smuggled shabu were recovered by policemen last year.

Tan and Chua belong to the wealthy Co Say family of Pili, Camarines Sur, while Casano is an employee of the family.

The Co Say family businesses deal with basic commodities, like rice, sugar and coconut oil.

The kidnapping of Tan, Chua and Casano is reportedly the third incident involving wealthy Chinese-Filipinos in Camarines Sur.

Police authorities have lamented that previous kidnappings had never been reported to them.

"I hope relatives of kidnap victims will cooperate with us in case this kind of incident will crop up again, for the early solution of the crime and without paying any ransom," said Chief Supt. Marcelo Navarro Jr., Bicol police chief.

Navarro had earlier ordered the Camarines Sur police to join the hunt for the kidnappers and their victims. *Juan Escandor Jr. PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Missing fishers feared abducted

SAN FERNANDO CITY—Relatives of five fishermen in Infanta, Pangasinan, who were reported missing since Jan. 18 when they went fishing in the South China Sea, have asked social welfare officials here to help find their relatives.

The relatives, quoting other fishermen who were with the group, said they were captured by men believed to be Taiwanese fishermen.

The five were identified as Miguelito Murcia, Ricardo Rada, Joseph Masalta, Junie Gabuna and William Canlon, all of Barangay Fatima in Infanta.

They went fishing aboard the Queen Alvie III, a motorized banca owned by Murcia.

Cristeta Absolor, regional director of the Department of Social Welfare and Development, said a report sent by Daisy Ofalzo, Infanta social welfare officer, showed that the missing fishermen were with another group of local fishermen in a motorized boat.

Ofalzo said that while in the high seas, suspected Taiwanese fishermen aboard a fishing vessel accosted Murcia's group.

She said the other group of fishermen fled, but when they returned, they found only Murcia's banca.

Ofalzo said the Infanta fishermen were fishing within Philippine waters as their boat was neither built nor equipped with facilities to enable it to venture beyond the 200-mile fishing ground limit.

She said the Taiwanese fishermen might have blamed the Filipinos for the removal of their fishing gears and other traps in the area.

Ofalzo said the other group of fishermen towed Murcia's boat to Subic Bay where they usually dock after a fishing expedition and reported the incident to authorities. *Peter La. Julian, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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INQUIRER Northern Luzon
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Crizel continues to inspire courage in cleanup fight

BY TONETTE OREJAS
Pampanga

IN THE LAST 10 years, the calendar of victims of American military toxic wastes in the Philippines had always been either of mourning or of fighting, says Myrla Baldonado, executive director of the People's Task Force for Bases Cleanup.

The calendar had also been replete with hope. It came from the determination of victims to tell the world that in former American bases, such as Clark in Pampanga and Subic in Zambales, toxic wastes had been "irresponsibly left" and are now killing Filipinos, according to Mandy Rivera, whose nephew died of cancer two years ago.

On Feb. 25, they marked a day of courage on their calendar. It's called "Crizel's Day," in honor of the late Crizel Jane Valencia, the 6-year-old girl who symbolized courage amid pain, one whom environmental activists hailed the "child toxic waste warrior."

FOR THIS special day, Elvira Taruc rolled her son Abraham's wheelchair on the asphalt road of the Madapdap resettlement site in Mabalacat, Pampanga.

"We will go to Crizel's house," she told her son Abraham, 5. The boy, diagnosed with cerebral palsy, replied with a smile.

In less than 10 minutes, the Tarucs were at the Valencias' house on 39th Street, mingling with around 100 mothers, children and environmental activists from Clark, Subic and the United States.

The children—some with physical deformities, many with illnesses showing through stunted growth, pale skin, and weak and bulging bodies—entered Crizel's room.

The room is only 3 meters by 3 meters, packed with photographs, books, toys and drawings Crizel received from friendly strangers and made while she was confined for leukemia at the Philippine General Hospital in Manila for almost a year.

She died on board the Rainbow Warrior, the Greenpeace International's ship that docked at the Manila North Harbor on Feb. 25 last year. She died while the country was celebrating the 14th anniversary of "People Power I" and while American and Filipino troops resumed large-scale military exercises after a nine-year hiatus.

She was only 6 years old when complications of leukemia snatched her life.

Crizel's crayon drawings had a special corner in her room. The drawings, which she made when she was in her sick bed, were reproduced in greeting cards, which are still being sold to raise funds for young toxic waste victims.

The same cards are flooding the offices of American legislators, according to Jorge Emmanuel, a leader of the US-based Filipino/American Coalition for Enviromental Solutions (Faces).

Emmanuel came Sunday to honor Crizel and update the victims on Faces' cleanup campaign in the US.

The children were in a playful mood. In batches of five, they played with the toys, viewed the photographs, read the books, and scanned the drawings.

A candle was lit before the altar assembled on top of a cardboard box.

"Don't call it a museum or else the children will be afraid. Call it an ordinary room where the children can play and read and interact," Herondina, Crizel's mother, said.

Extraordinary child

The ordinary room of the extraordinary child who, according to Senate President Aquilino Pimentel Jr., "gave a face and a name to toxic waste victims," was blessed by Fr. Melchor Sitchon.

Outside, children sang. They grew up at the Clark Air Base Command (Cabcom) evacuation center, where Crizel had also lived and got sick from water confirmed contaminated with mercury, nitrite and lead.

"I am just a small voice. I have just a small dream," belted out 15 young singers from the Manibaug Pasig Porac Elementary School, referring to Crizel's kind of heroism.

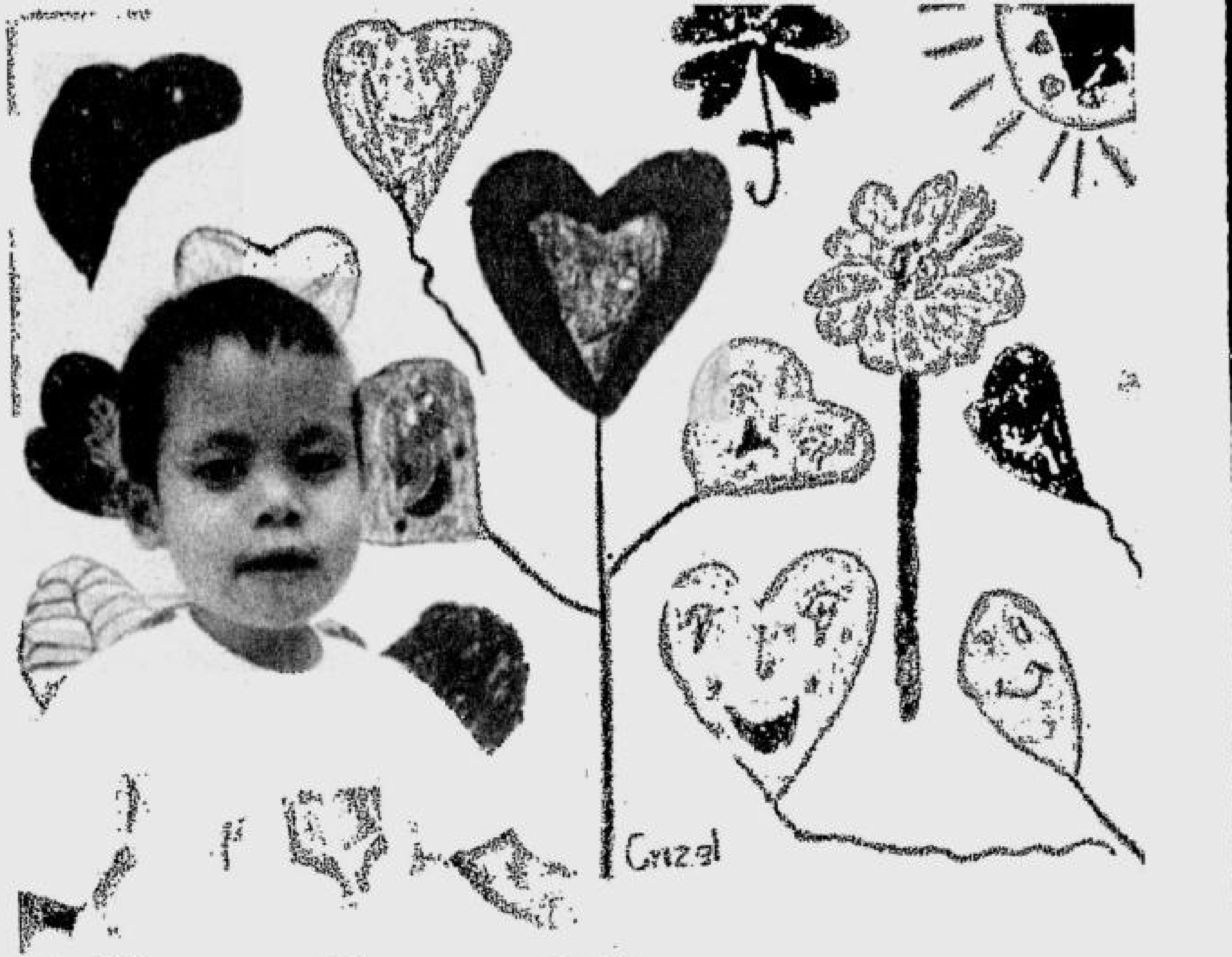
"May Crizel continue to inspire courage," Sitchon said.

She indeed does.

Thousands of miles away—in Berkeley and Los Angeles in California, Seattle in Washington and in New York—Filipino-Americans and Americans also came together that same day, according to Cristina Leano, Faces coordinator, in an e-mail message.

Faces held a memorial, letter writing, candlelight vigil, community forum and a Mass for Crizel, Leano said.

The Crizel Commemoration Week began in the US on Feb. 15 in College Park, Maryland, she said.



CRIZEL Jane Valencia, the "child toxic waste warrior," has touched the hearts of many people.

In 15 events throughout the United States, Leano said hundreds stood in big circles, displayed the pictures of Crizel and other dead toxic waste victims, and pledged actions.

"We remember Crizel and others who have died or continue to suffer from our country's legacy in Clark and Subic. We commit to continue this struggle for bases cleanup and global environmental justice, today, and until the day there are no more Crizels. We promise her death will not be in vain," she said.

Emmanuel, an environmental scientist, said Crizel had become the "nexus of two struggles."

"She was the product of the inequality of relationship between the Philippines and the US—a relationship that allowed one country to destroy the environment, poison the land and refuse to take responsibility for its actions," he said.

"Crizel personified the two struggles. Her courage and determination in the face of overwhelming odds also embody the struggle for civil rights, racial justice and dignity that Filipino-Americans are fighting today—the struggle to be treated with respect as a human being, as an equal in an increasingly diverse society."

Crizel's creative and courageous spirit has touched the hearts of many people.

In the US, cleanup resolutions have been passed in Congress, pledges of support have been made by four influential environmental organizations, three largest organizations of Filipino-Americans and 12 church organizations of various denominations, Emmanuel said.

Concert for courage

On the eve of her first death anniversary, the task force held the concert, "Songs for Crizel, Portrait of a Youthful Courage."

For the fifth time, tenor Ramon Acoymo sang for free to raise funds and hopes.

Crizel has also moved Philippine senators.

In a message shared during the concert, Pimentel, who was among the 12 senators who voted for the junking of the extension of the Philippine-US Military Bases Agreement in 1991, said:

"Let us find strength in the courage that she showed us during her ordeal. Let us pray for ourselves and for our country so that we may be able to find the courage to face this problem and ceaselessly advocate for bases cleanup. Let her death not be for naught."

Sen. Loren Legarda-Leviste called Crizel the "essence of life and joy while she was with us."

"We cannot forget this darling child who showed such dignity despite her fatal illness. We must remember Crizel and the suffering of Clark and Subic communities," she said.

It was not enough to remember her, according to Sen. Sergio Osmeña III. "The grief of losing Crizel should move us to empowerment as veritable toxic waste warriors in her stead," he said.

Ex-dynamite fishers take care of marine animals

BY ELIZABETH MARCELO
Subic Bay Freeport

ALONITO Lazaro had no choice. He was jobless. Whatever he earned from Bahrain as a contract worker had already been used up.

In a coastal village in San Antonio, Zambales, where he grew up, fishing was the common means of livelihood. But the money he made from his daily catch was never enough for his family.

"*Napilitan akong sumama sa mga mamumutok* (I was forced to go with the blast fishers)," he said. "*Mamumutok*" is how residents call fishermen engaged in dynamite fishing.

Since 1998, Lazaro earned his keep from blast fishing. But this stopped last year when the Subic Bay Marine Exploratorium (Marinex) recruited local divers for its' Subic Bay Ocean Adventure project.

Lazaro is one of six Filipinos, all residents of Olongapo City and Zambales, who passed the test and joined the project in October and November last year.

Today, the 32-year-old father of three does not even have the heart to throw a jellyfish ashore.

"*Nang mapasok ako dito, na*-realize *ko, ang dami ko na palang nasirang yamang-dagat* (When I joined the project, I realized that I have destroyed many of our marine resources)," he said.

Eye opener

Marinex had planned all along to recruit children of local residents engaged in illegal fishing, hoping that they could convince their elders to stop their harmful practices.

The idea was to show them how and why marine life, including corals and underwater plants, should be cared for, so they can share their experiences and lessons with their parents and other elders.

It turned out that four out of six commercial divers in the area were once engaged in trawling and blast fishing.

Like Lazaro, poverty drove Nelson Espiritu to become a *mamumutok* in 1987. He was 18 years old then, a young man beginning to enjoy things in life that don't come free.

But the fisherman's son could not find a regular job, having finished only elementary school. Dynamite fishing did not require a diploma.

Today, Espiritu, Lazaro and the other Filipino divers of Marinex try to dissuade neighbors and friends from blast fishing and trawling.

"*Kasama kasi sa responsibilidad namin 'yan* (That's part of our responsibilities)," said Jaime Jovero of Olongapo.

To prepare them for their main responsibility of feeding the animals and maintaining their habitats, Marinex taught the divers how to care for marine life.

Both Jovero and Ernesto Mocorro consider this an eye opener.

Jovero was a trawler before he went into commercial diving in 1992. In his high school days in Biliran in Eastern Visayas, Mocorro went trawling on weekends to earn a little more for his school and daily expenses.

Now, he and the other divers have realized that trawling is just as harmful as dynamite or cyanide fishing, as it also cuts short the natural life cycle of marine life.

Trawlers use nets with tiny holes that can catch even schools of fry.

"*Dapat mahalin ang hayop na parang taong may buhay na dapat pahalagahan* (We should care for animals like people whose lives should be valued)," Jovero said.

The day the INQUIRER visited the marine exploratorium at the Subic Bay Freeport's Camayan Wharf, the divers assembled the floating stage for the first live marine show that will open in March—the "Encounter with the Whales."

Fur seals and dolphins will later share the limelight with the whales.

Lone woman

The trials and tribulations she went through are proof of the mettle of the lone woman in the crew, Erma Lumagbas, 25, of Balangiga, Eastern Samar.

Her sister brought her to Metro Manila when she was only 14. For two years, she worked as a maid before landing a job in a bakeshop in Cubao, Quezon City.

In 1993, she married Joel Roquenio, a carpenter. In 1997, she had just given birth to their third child when her husband was arrested and jailed for alleged involvement in a robbery-holdup.

Her sister-in-law, Josephine Morero, brought Erma and her children to Calapandayan in Subic, Zambales. Morero's husband helped her get a job at the Subic Bay Yacht Club, where she trained as a diver.

In November last year, she joined the marine crew of Subic Bay Ocean Adventure.

Training

The divers honed their diving skills under the watchful eyes of marine director Scott Sharp. They worked under the direct supervision of marine construction and dive supervisor Bob Hall.

"Absolutely brilliant," Hall exclaimed, when asked to assess the Filipino crew's performance.

"They're all experienced divers, very capable and all of them work hard. We only had to make sure they're safe in water so their training was more on safe diving," he said.

Four of the six divers are formerly employed by Seaway Marine Services. They are Jovero, Mocorro, Espiritu and Benamor Labadan, a former automotive mechanic from Barangay Cabalan in Olongapo.

Seaway provided underwater construction and maintenance services, such as underwater welding, painting and hulk cleaning and rehabilitation of buoys.

As lead divers of the Ocean Adventure marine crew, Jovero and Labadan earn P15,000 a month. The others are paid P350 a day or a little over P8,000 a month.

Ocean Adventure's Filipino divers consider themselves fortunate for having landed a "unique job"—a mixture of work and play.

Labadan said the only difficult job they've done so far was the construction of the perimeter fence for the 50-meter by 166-meter enclosure that served as the whales' habitat.

This required three hours of underwater work daily. The surface crew sewed screen panels to aquaguards that the divers had to assemble and install underwater—at a depth of 30 meters inside the enclosure and 50 meters outside.

The Filipinos look forward to learning something different each day.

The diving crew's daily routine includes checking the bottom of the enclosure for waste that could harm the whales and checking the integrity of the fence—which means ensuring that there are no holes and rubbish.

The divers have to watch out for other marine animals, such as jellyfish, stone fish and lion fish, which can hurt the whales or cause harm if swallowed by the marine mammals.

"*Akala ko, nung unang makahuli ako ng* stone fish, *papatayin. Hindi pala. Sa* aquarium *pala dadalhin* (When I caught a stone fish for the first time, I thought we will kill it. I was wrong as it was taken to an aquarium)," Mocorro said. "When we catch a jellyfish, we take it out of the enclosure and set it free."

Close encounter

The crew all started out scared but ended up realizing that a touch was all that was needed to start a friendship with the whales.

The first whale that Espiritu and Lumagbas touched was Tonka. They can now identify which one is Tonka, Pounder, Hawk, Coral or Deuce.

Lumagbas said they have to play with all of them, otherwise, "*magtatampo 'yung iba* (the others will get jealous)."

The experience totally transformed Lazaro, who used to be "*kapitan ng bangka*"—the one who lit and threw the dynamite sticks.

"When I first saw the whales here, the first thought that entered my mind was that it is good to eat. I have eaten a whale dish when one beached in San Antonio town," he said.

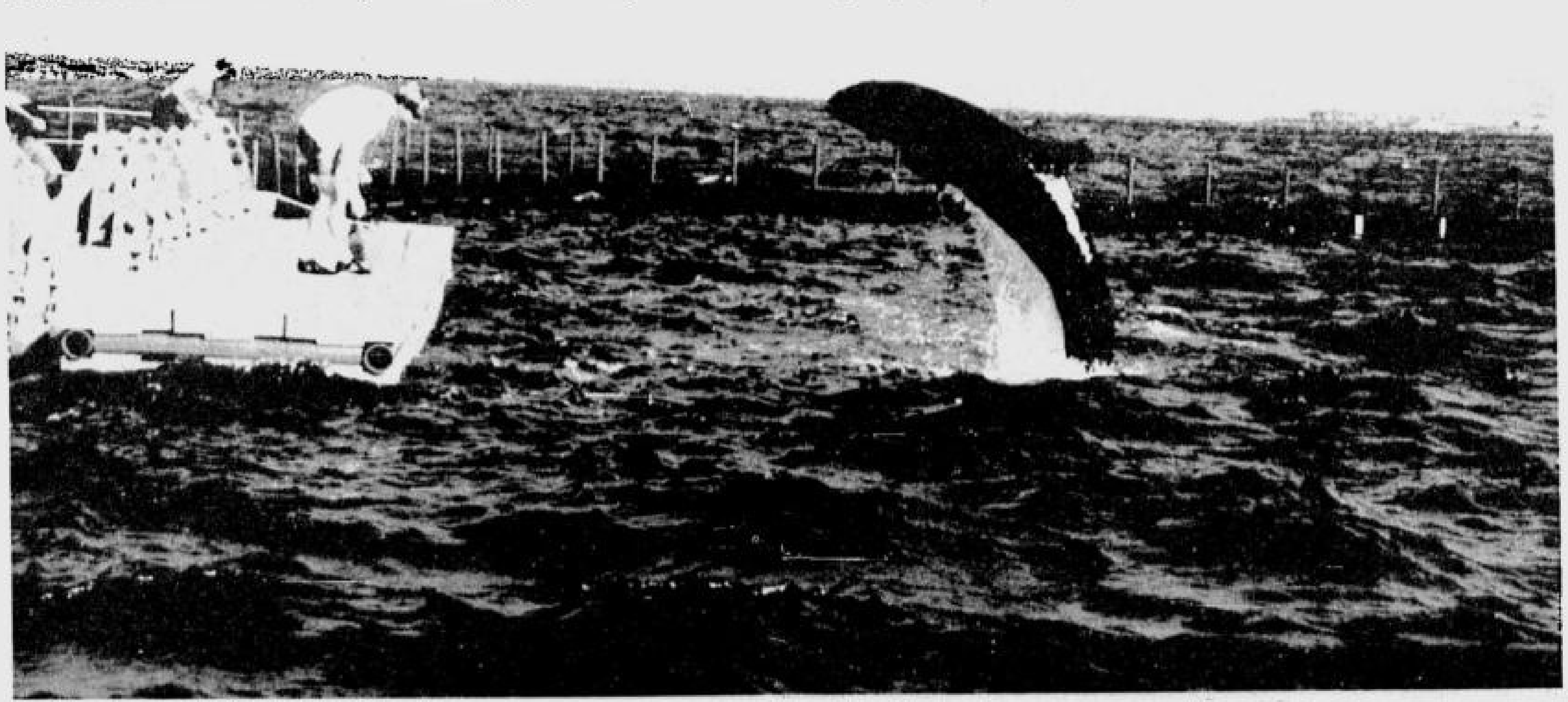
"But when I touched a live whale, I felt something different. This is the first time that I touched an animal that is so meek."

Cruel, illegal

The idea of keeping such gentle animals—or any animal for that matter—in captivity just for a show is "reprehensible" as far as animal welfare and environmental activists are concerned.

Nonetheless, some experts maintain a positive view of live marine shows as one way of raising public consciousness on threatened animals. Among them is Dr. Enrico Villoso, head of the Institute of

EX-DYNAMITE/ p.17



FEEDING time is fun time, not only for the whales but also for the Subic Bay Ocean Adventure team of animal trainers and divers.

Battle for official flower of Benguet goes on

By Avigail Olarte
Benguet

OFFICIALS of Benguet, known for its exotic flowers and a booming cutflower industry, are seeking to replace everlasting (*Helichrysum bracteatum*) as provincial flower.

Vice Gov. Robert Tinda-an said the provincial board should decide on what type of flower would best embody the Cordillera people and their culture as everlasting is grown outside of Benguet.

"Everlasting is now grown everywhere. It is no longer exclusive to the region. Besides, better (species of) flowers have been discovered," Tinda-an said.

Everlasting was declared as the flower of Benguet in 1969 when then First Lady Imelda Marcos requested the province to adopt a flower to identify it from other provinces.

Under Resolution No. 69-16, the provincial board chose everlasting as provincial flower since it was popular in the region and adaptable to local soil and climate conditions.

The Benguet Lily (*Lilium Philipinensis*), a waxy-white fragrant flower originally grown in the Cordillera, appears as the next viable candidate. The flower, however, is now considered endangered, and horticulturists have tried but failed to culture this flower.

"It's a very delicate flower. Once you take it out from its natural habitat, it dies immediately," said Board Member Marvin Atos.

Considered a shy plant, the trumpet-shaped Benguet Lily is known to grow in isolated, even unreachable areas.

Reports said that in 1995, the population of the Benguet Lily became severely depleted due to over-collection.

Mostly found in the pine regions of Benguet, one would be lucky if a flower or two would be spotted on the steep ridges of the Halsema Highway, a major highway linking Benguet to other Cordillera towns. Reports said a few lilies have begun to sprout in nearby Mt. Province.

H.P. Whitemarsh, one of the American pioneers who discovered Baguio City and was credited for naming the lily, domesticated the Benguet Lily.

But the flower had been relegated to the province's wilderness after Whitemarsh's efforts in domesticating the lily were not sustained.

Researcher Bridget Bautista said the Benguet Lily might also be the only surviving white lily in the Philippines.

Calla Lily, although pure white, is actually not a part of the *Liliaceae* family, she said.

"The Easter Lily, widely grown in Japan and China, has yellowish and purple streaks. Benguet Lily *lang talaga ang* pure white," Bautista said, adding that most lilies are yellow.

"This flower has a very high potential in the international market. The Benguet Lily, once known, would shine. It is a prized possession of our mountains," she said.

Benguet Lily is known as Putputak in Kankanaey, Swasoy in Ibaloy, and Kanyon in Ilocano.

Propagated by offshoots, the Benguet Lily was identified as a branchless, bulbous herb about 70 centimeters tall, having big and showy flowers with five lobes and very narrow leaves.

In 1999, Atos proposed to replace everlasting with the Benguet Lily as the official flower of the province.

"The Benguet Lily, in its pure white color symbolizes purity, peace and justice, which symbolically are the focal points of the indigenous tribes' character traits," he said.

Ex-dynamite . . .

(From page 16)

Marine Fisheries and Oceanography of the University of the Philippines in the Visayas.

In a report published by the INQUIRER, Villoso explained that a live marine show had greater impact than shows seen on video or television. However, Villoso stressed that if the show was only for entertainment, it was tantamount to cruelty to animals.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has ordered a probe into the biosafety factors of the project, including the impact of the introduction of new species into the Subic Bay area and the construction of the project without the needed environmental impact assessment.

The SBMA said it has issued the required environmental clearances to the project, citing its authority to do so under RA 7227, the Base Conversion Act which also embodies the SBMA charter.

The controversy has turned into a legal debate, with the DENR questioning the legal basis of SBMA's authority.

"They say it is not explicit in the law," SBMA ecology center officer-in-charge Ameth de la Llana said. "We say it is explicit in the law's implementing rules and regulations."

Nonetheless, De la Llana said both parties have agreed to work together to resolve the issue.

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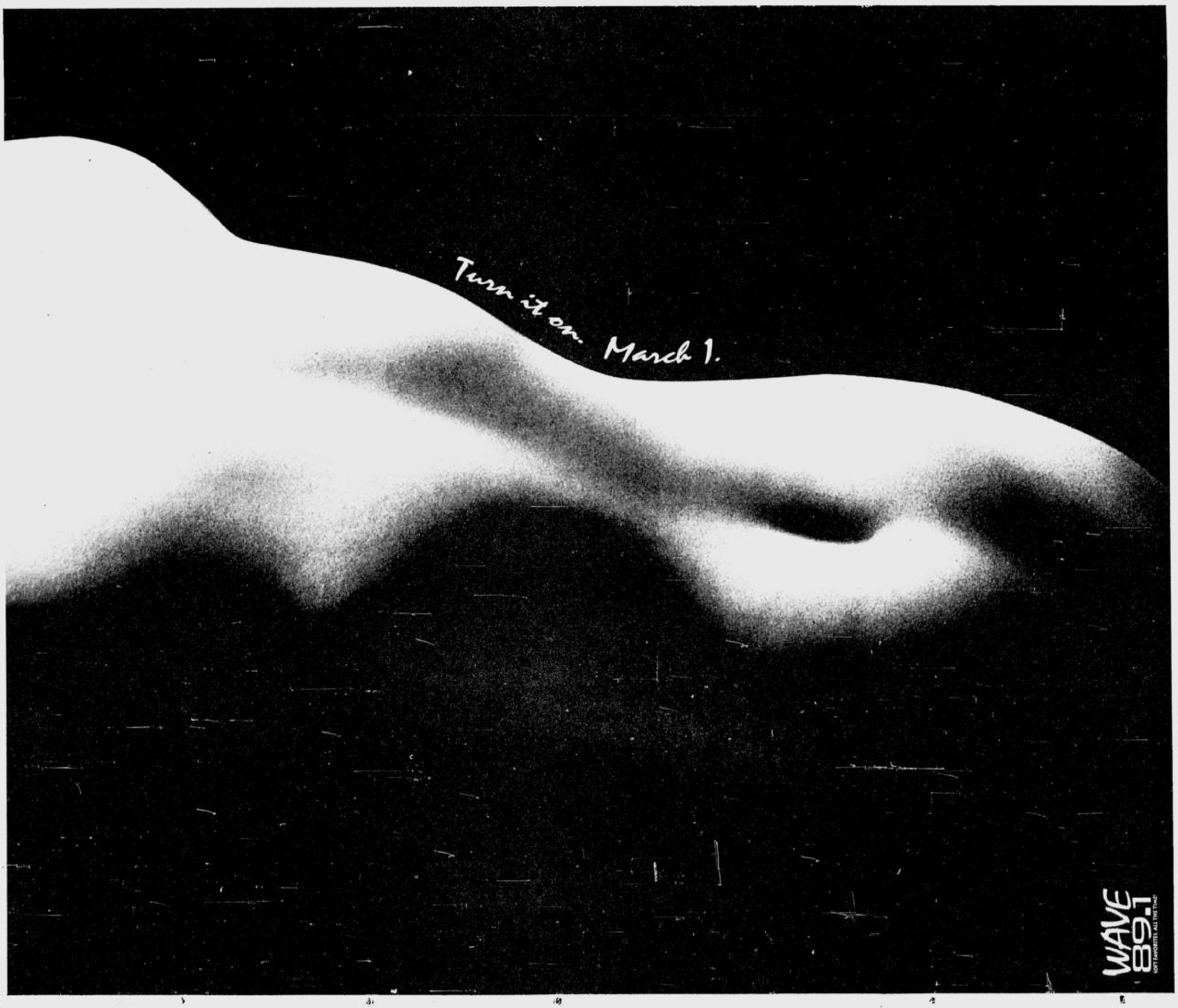

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Wong links Biazon to mess

(From page A1)

been released. After the budget is allocated, I no longer have anything to do with the money," Biazon said.

He said that he had received conflicting reports on the status of the allocation, and that it was Wong who should explain whether the money was spent for the specified purpose.

According to sources, Wong declared a failure of the two biddings as there were indications that these were rigged.

Because of Wong's action, the transaction was not consummated.

Biazon also denied knowing or interceding for the suppliers of the goggles.

He said that one of his godchildren turned out to be a supplier of Navy equipment but that he had nothing to do with her business.

"She was even scolded by my wife for dropping my name," he said.

No whitewash

In Malacañang, President Macapagal-Arroyo said "there will be no whitewash in the investigation that I have ordered" regarding Wong's call for reforms in the Marine Corps' procurement system.

In a statement she read during a regular press briefing in Malacañang, the President pointed out that the issue went beyond Wong's tactlessness in berating Marine officers in front of their men.

She said what was at the heart of the issue was the government's duty to give soldiers the best arms and equipment.

"We owe it to our soldiers to provide them the best equipment our money can buy. Nothing short of that would be acceptable to me as the Commander in Chief," the President said.

"We all know that many of our gallant soldiers have lost their lives in the defense of our democracy. Yet, some of our soldiers may have perished as result of inferior equipment. If true, this must stop," she said.

Ms Macapagal called for vigilance, "most especially" among officers and soldiers.

"Let us also be one in our commitment to the eradication of graft and corruption in the government . . . in our efforts to maintain the high moral standard that we promised to work for in Edsa," she said.

Asked if she was satisfied with the way Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Angelo Reyes had handled the conflict between Wong and the Marine Corps, the President said Reyes had done the right thing.

She said Reyes had been silently putting together an investigation team and bringing the matter before the Office of the Ombudsman.

Reyes had referred to the Ombudsman the findings of an AFP probe, which showed the existence of irregular transactions in the Navy.

Desierto

Ombudsman Aniano Desierto yesterday ordered an investigation of the matter.

The President also denied that Wong had been pressured into early retirement, saying that as AFP chief of staff, Reyes was acting within his powers to recommend the "assignment of the different personnel."

As for the comment that Wong violated military traditions when he scolded Marine officers in front of their men, she said that this was just one issue in the case and that the AFP was addressing it.

Biazon said that before he left for a speaking engagement in Nairobi, Kenya, two weeks ago, he asked Wong about the goggles because the Marines were complaining that these were not available.

"I told him about the perception that the Marines are disadvantaged under him," Biazon said.

The senator also said that Wong called him when he returned from Kenya to apologize for having mentioned him in the Feb. 15 speech.

Wong clarified that he cited Biazon as an "example of a good officer," the senator said.

Biazon served as Marine commandant before becoming AFP chief of staff.

Prices

Military sources said Lemus was instrumental in the processing of documents for the acquisition of the goggles and related communications equipment.

They said that when Lemus' price list was revealed, Timbol Trading undercut the former's bid by offering slightly lower prices.

In his speech, Wong pointed out that the bids were "close together—within P200,000, within P100,000."

"It's very obvious (*halatang-halata*)," he said, adding that he wanted such irregularities in the procurement system stopped.

Wong also raised the Marine Corps' alleged purchase of substandard helmets (P3.8 million) and HK-MP5 assault rifles (P7.2 million) that were not delivered to the Marine armory.

"How can a Marine be a shabby person to another Marine? I cannot permit you to be shabby toward each other. (You must stop this. You are getting killed. You are being hit by bullets, and yet you are not being provided Kevlar helmets)," he said.

Wong also told the Marines that their officers were used so "those with evil intent" could get the 72 assault rifles.

Dolorfino said "the officers were humiliated." He said it was a "big injustice" when Wong made "sweeping accusations in front of the rank and file."

He said that the officers later told Wong at a closed-door meeting that their effectiveness as combat leaders would be lessened if anomalies were discussed in front of their men.

Dolorfino said the officer corps, enlisted personnel and "Council of Elders" had drawn up a one-page manifesto protesting Wong's action.

The Council of Elders is composed of past and retired senior Marine commandants and officers, including Biazon.

The Marine Corps later sought an audience with Reyes.

"So how can we be charged with insubordination?" Dolorfino said.

He added that Wong's leadership style had created "a wedge between us and the enlisted personnel."

7 officers

Desierto said the military documents provided by Reyes showed that seven ranking military officers, including Lt. Gen. Edgardo Espinosa, and a civilian employee were behind the supposed irregular transactions.

The other persons recommended for prosecution were Colonels Inocencio Artajos, Sergio Eria and Nathalio Toreno, Lt. Commander Eduardo Loyola, Majors Luciardo Obena and Godofredo Tabila, and government accountant Danilo Moreno.

Desierto said the documents, which were transmitted by AFP Vice Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Jose Calimlim to his office, were the result of an in-house investigation of the AFP inspector general and the judge advocate general.

The investigation established that there was a prima facie evidence to indict the military officers for graft and fraud (violation of Section 213 of the Revised Penal Code), according to Desierto, quoting the recommendation of the AFP panel.

"But the Ombudsman will still verify this and check if the evidence is complete. The Ombudsman will have to conduct its own fact-finding inquiry before I can order a preliminary investigation on the case," Desierto said. ***With reports from Juliet L. Javellana and Michael Lim Ubac***

AFP must spend ₱6B for arms this year

By Carlito Pablo

THE ARMED Forces must spend the P5.484 billion constituting its modernization funds before the end of the year. If not, the money will go back to the National Treasury.

Brig. Gen. Cristolito Balaoing, director of the AFP Modernization Program Management Office, said failure to use the funds within the specified period would further set back the long-delayed modernization program.

"We have to make use of it by end of December this year. Otherwise, it will be returned to the National Treasury and we will have to undergo the same tedious process to get such an allocation," Balaoing said.

The P5.4-billion budget was provided in the Special Allocation Release Order (Saro) signed by then Budget Secretary Benjamin Diokno with the approval of then President Joseph Estrada.

"The Saro is good for only two years, and we should fast-track our process without sacrificing transparency," Balaoing said.

The fund represents the AFP's share from the sale of portions of Fort Bonifació during the Ramos administration.

According to the timetable drawn up by Balaoing, the major service commands—Army, Navy, Air Force—as well as the General Headquarters should finish conceptualizing their projects by the end of the first semester.

In the second semester, all projects would be subject to evaluation and review as negotiations are banned during the election period.

Bidding starts in the third quarter, and approval of contracts should come by the end of the year, Balaoing said.

President Macapagal-Arroyo earlier announced that an additional P3 billion would be allocated to the modernization fund.

The additional allocation will only be released when the military submits a program on how to use the money, Balaoing said.

Under the revised AFP modernization program, priority is given to the Army, Navy and Air Force, in that order.

The priority given to the Army is a result of the resurgence of the communist and secessionist insurgencies in the countryside.

GMA cites power of Internet

(From page A1)

Edsa People Power II by providing timely news, sharing views and promoting vigilance.

She noted that during the historic event, Filipinos all over the world depended on the site more than on CNN.

"Our administration welcomes what we are launching tonight," Ms Macapagal said, citing the new ground that INQ7.net had broken for Philippine online journalism.

She said the government would encourage initiatives that strengthen the country's information and communications technology sector (ICT).

The President reiterated her three-point information and communications technology (ICT) strategy that she outlined earlier during her first press conference in Malacañang.

The agenda includes creating the country's ICT infrastructure, laying down the right government policies for ICT development and developing ICT human resources.

The President said websites, like INQ7.net, showed the country's ability to compete in the New Economy.

She pointed out the government was giving importance to the ICT sector with its electronic commerce action agenda or ISP.com.

"The spearheading and monitoring of the action plan falls under the Information Technology and E-commerce Council jointly chaired by Trade Secretary (Mar Roxas) and the private sector," Ms Macapagal said.

An avowed Internet savvy and IT champion, Ms Macapagal has pushed for the growth of Internet and computer access even while she was still a senator.

She filed several information technology-related bills, including Net2 that aims to provide schools with computers and Internet access.

WARM hellos are exchanged between PDI president/CEO, Sandy Prieto-Romualdez and PLDT president Manuel Pangilinan during the launch of INQ7 Interactive Inc. at the GMA building in Quezon City. Behind are Finance Secretary Bert Romulo and PDI Chair Marixi Prieto.

Synergy

For their part, the parent companies of INQ7.net stressed the synergy between the two media giants, which are both committed to journalistic excellence.

"As marriage partners, we do not sleep," Felipe Gozon, chair, president and CEO of GMA-7, said, referring to the fact that INQ7 operates round the clock.

"INQ7 is GMA and Philippine Daily Inquirer's initial contribution to the Macapagal administration's thrust in the information and communications technology sector. INQ7 represents the best in Filipino reporting. May we never cease to seek higher levels of journalistic excellence," added Marixi Prieto, PDI chair.

Asked what the PDI-GMA joint venture in INQ7.net meant for the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., PLDT president and CEO Manuel V. Pangilinan said: "It's convergence at work. PLDT is providing the links for INQ7 to cyberspace. It (INQ7.net) is an important content. We want to see it in cellular phones, television and other news delivery media."

A subsidiary of the PLDT beneficial trust fund, Mediaquest Holdings Inc., bought a 66-percent stake in GMA for P8.5 billion earlier this month.

Golez: Military row . . .

(From page A1)

"constitutional ramifications" of its rift with Wong.

Honasan also said the gag order that Reyes issued on Wong would not help resolve the conflict.

Reyes was said to have told Wong Monday to stop granting interviews to the media because "the situation is getting worse."

Honasan said Reyes was not in a position to prevent even ordinary soldiers from speaking against their superiors and other military officers because it was the AFP chief himself who set the example when he withdrew support from then President Joseph Estrada during People Power II.

Golez hedged when asked if he thought Wong was being wrongly punished for berating the Marines for alleged questionable financial practices.

"That was the result of the talks between Wong and Reyes," he simply said.

On the other hand, Golez said it was a "good thing" that the Office of the Ombudsman was now investigating the supposed irregularities cited by Wong.

He said such a public row involving the military might not happen again because it was highly unlikely that the next Navy chief would be as outspoken as Wong.

"He's one in a million, so I think his style would not be replicated in the Navy," Golez said.

Earlier, Reyes offered Wong the newly formed Northern Command as a concession to Marine officers who were demanding his relief. But Wong refused what he considered a demotion and said he would retire effective March 1.

He has since been persuaded to relinquish his command and go on "floating" status until his scheduled retirement in December.

Wong visited the PMA in Baguio City yesterday, to "breathe some fresh air."

"I am delighted to be with you. I will not stay long. Thank you and good afternoon," was all he said in Filipino on his arrival shortly before 3 p.m.

He had a talk with his 1969 classmate current PMA superintendent, Maj. Gen. Manuel Carranza, and later held an hour-long command conference with Navy officials at the headquarters conference room.

Sought for an interview on the way to Longayban Hall, Wong said Reyes had told him to "tone down."

"Any interview has to have permission from him. There has to be a direct order. Otherwise, *ikukulong ako* (I will be jailed). I hope you understand," Wong said.

He then proceeded to the Borromeo Field at 4:45 p.m. for a parade in review.

Honasan, a cashiered Army colonel who led a series of destructive coup attempts against the Aquino administration, said Reyes should be blamed for the turmoil in the AFP.

He said it was Reyes who "planted the seeds of mutiny and insubordination" in the military by going to the Edsa Shrine at the height of People Power II and announcing support for then Vice President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

"That is the result of his action in January when he went to Edsa," Honasan said.

Honasan, who is seeking reelection, spoke with the INQUIRER yesterday at the Davao International Airport.

He was on his way to Compostela Valley and Davao del Norte for a campaign sortie. ***With reports from Jowel F. Canuday, PDI Mindanao Bureau; Frank Cimatu, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

Espinosa mad at Wong; Meco waiting

(From page A1)

post as Navy chief, Espinosa said:

"*Ang hirap sa kanya, hindi siya mag*-resign *kung siya'y magre*-resign. *Para siya kasing bakla* (The problem with him is that he doesn't resign if he wants to resign. He's like a homosexual)."

Espinosa, once touted as a strong contender for the post of chief of staff of the Armed Forces, is the highest-ranking Marine officer in the country. He is one rank higher than Maj. Gen. Librado Ladia, present commandant of the Marine Corps.

He is the commandant of the AFP Joint Command and Staff College. The post is reserved for senior colonels and brigadier generals (one star), but it was given to him after he was unceremoniously relieved as chief of the Southern Command in February last year.

Espinosa dismissed as mere sour grapes Wong's earlier statements about irregularities in the Marines Corps' procurement system.

He refused to comment on findings that the purchase of Kevlar helmets was tainted with graft. ***(See related story on Page A1.)***

"I will speak in the proper forum, not in the media. I don't need a media blitz," he said.

According to a previous military investigation, the purchase was not subjected to bidding and was instead parceled out into 14 purchase orders.

Out of the 799 helmets ordered and paid for, only 299 were delivered. Worse, what was delivered were not US-made Kevlar but inferior Taiwan-made helmets.

Out of the race

Espinosa is out of the race for the post of AFP chief of staff.

President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday said she had offered Espinosa the post of the Philippines' representative in Taiwan.

"If he wants to be in Meco (Manila's Economic and Cultural Office), he can have it. It's his for the asking," she said.

The Meco chief is the Philippines' de facto envoy to Taiwan, which it formally regards as a province of China in keeping with Beijing's "One-China" policy.

But Espinosa, who retires from military service in August, said: "I don't know about (the Meco offer) . . . Maybe you should ask the President about it."

A graduate of Class 1967 of the Philippine Military Academy, Espinosa is the most senior officer among the contenders for AFP chief of staff.

"They all say that I'm already out of contention. If the post is not given to me, then I will be happy to retire," he said.

Espinosa said he had filed his retirement at the General Headquarters.

He cited the military rule stipulating that a retiring officer should file his papers not later than six months before reaching the mandatory retirement age of 56.

"It's not what you call an early retirement because it's procedural. You should submit your (retirement papers) long before your retirement," he said.

United Opposition

Espinosa has claimed to be the first military officer to make contact with the then United Opposition at the height of the "jueteng" scandal that led to the ouster of then President Joseph Estrada.

He also provided security to Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson, who made the jueteng exposé.

Until now, no solid explanation has been given on his ouster as Southern Command chief, which sources attribute to his alleged involvement in illegal activities in Mindanao.

Ash Wednesday . . .

(From page A1)

to dust thou shalt return."

"It is the start of Lent. It is a season of fasting and abstinence. It is also a time for reflection to start ridding ourselves of sinfulness and for government to slowly eliminate corruption in the different departments," said Msgr. Hernando Córonel, media director of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP).

Catholics observe Ash Wednesday by fasting and abstaining. Every Friday of Lent is a day of abstinence.

"The ash tells us that we should be sorry for our sins and therefore do penance, penitence and renew our lives,"CBCP president, Archbishop Orlando Quevedo, said in explaining the meaning of Ash Wednesday in Cotabato City over the Church-run radio dxMS.

The ashes come from palm fronds blessed on the previous Palm Sunday. Palm Sunday commemorates the triumphant entry of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem a few days before he was arrested, judged and sentenced to die on the cross.

The dried palm fronds are burned several days before the observance of Ash Wednesday.

Palm Sunday ushers in the Holy Week which falls this year from April 9 to April 14. Easter Sunday, which is the Catholic Church's greatest feast, celebrates the resurrection of Jesus.

President should lead

Coronel said President Macapagal should take the lead in cleaning the government of graft and corruption.

"We don't have to delve into specifics. Of course, we have the corruption in the military and in the education department. It is our message to the President to take the necessary means to rid the government of corruption," Coronel said.

Lent is the 40-day period that starts on Ash Wednesday and culminates on Easter Sunday. ***With reports from Norman Bordadora and Edwin O.Fernandez***

SC to rule on Erap suit on March 13

(From page A1)

He was in Zamboanga City to campaign for his wife, former first lady Dr. Luisa "Loi" Ejercito, a senatorial candidate of the Puwersa ng Masa.

Estrada, accused of having amassed billions of pesos in unexplained wealth during his 30-month tenure, was ousted by a military-backed popular revolt on Jan. 20 and replaced by Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, then the Vice President.

He has filed petitions with the court questioning the legitimacy of Ms Macapagal's presidency, claiming he was illegally ousted by a mob and that he was still President immune from criminal suits.

State prosecutors were to have filed a host of graft charges against the fallen leader last week, but the Supreme Court had given him a 30-day reprieve while it studies his petitions.

Anti-Estrada protesters are accusing the court of dragging its feet on Estrada's case, despite what they claim were overwhelming evidence of his guilt.

Khan told reporters that Davide "expects" the tribunal to resolve whether Estrada or Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was the country's legal president "in 10 working days."

Upon the prodding of reporters, the spokesperson of the tribunal personally asked Davide about the time that the tribunal would need before it could issue a ruling on the controversial issue.

"The Chief Justice answered that he expected a ruling in 10 working days beginning (today). The tribunal will exert its best effort to follow this (deadline). That's the extent of my understanding," Khan said in a telephone interview.

Normally, all 15 justices including the Chief Justice sit in en banc sessions of the court.

However, Davide and Justice Artemio Panganiban have inhibited themselves from the case in response to a petition filed by Estrada lawyer Rene Saguisag.

Hence, only 13 justices will sit in the en banc session on March 13.

Senior Associate Justice Josue Bellosillo will preside over the Supreme Court en banc when it discusses the legality of Ms Macapagal's presidency.

Lawyers of Estrada insist that Estrada had been forced to leave Malacañang to prevent bloodshed.

Estrada said that he was merely a "President on leave" and that Ms Macapagal was just an "acting President."

He also said that Ms Macapagal could not assume the presidency because the conditions for succession as provided for by the Constitution had not been met.

But Ms Macapagal's supporters said her ascent to the presidency was constitutional, citing "permanent disability" on the part of Estrada.

Khan said the Supreme Court received the last pleading on the case only two days ago.

"This means it was only (yesterday) that the Supreme Court began to consider all the papers submitted regarding the case," he said.

Unanimous decision

As the Supreme Court studies the case, Rep. Joker Arroyo is urging the court to come up with a unanimous decision in favor of Ms Macapagal.

"We hope it will be an overwhelming decision, not a divided vote," Arroyo, a senatorial candidate of the People Power Coalition, said during a campaign sortie.

Arroyo, a prosecutor in the aborted impeachment trial of Estrada, said an overwhelming decision would enforce the legality of Ms Macapagal's presidency.

"Even if we win, if it's by a close vote or a divided court, it will not send the right signal," he said.

Arroyo expressed the hope that the high court would follow the example set by the United States Supreme Court in deciding crucial cases.

On the segregation of the white and colored people, US Chief Justice L. Warren persuaded the high court to render a unanimous decision, according to Arroyo.

"And it did to demonstrate to the American people that the court was foursquare against segregation," he said.

Arroyo said he expected a favorable ruling for Ms Macapagal.

He said the reported plan of Saguisag to file an impeachment case against Ms Macapagal indicated that the Estrada camp was recognizing her as the rightful President.

"By trying to impeach her, he (Saguisag) is recognizing inferentially the legitimacy of President Macapagal-Arroyo," Arroyo said.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon described the presidency of Ms Macapagal as "irreversible" because she has an "effective and working government in place" and the support of the people.

In addition, foreign governments, according to Biazon recognize her administration.

"This can't be reversed by a Supreme Court ruling favoring Estrada," he said. "What will the military do since it has withdrawn support from him?" he told reporters.

"The only way to reverse the (legality of the) Macapagal administration is another revolution," Biazon said. But he said this was unlikely to happen. *With reports from Juliet L. Javellana, Christine Avendaño and AFP*

Lean crowd greets Erap in Zamboanga

(From page A1)

fore she was led away.

He later shook hands with the rest.

Estrada's wife is attempting to redeem the family name in the May 14 elections. The former first lady and the rest of the opposition's senatorial ticket arrived in Zamboanga City earlier aboard a separate plane.

"We don't have problems in Zamboanga. We are sure winners here," Estrada said of the port city.

Convoy

His convoy passed without the usual throngs of waving supporters. He entered a hotel to meet his wife and other candidates then motored off to meet other followers.

The only other time he appeared in public since leaving Malacañang on Jan. 20 was at a rally in San Juan, Metro Manila, to announce his wife's candidacy in the senatorial elections.

Estrada is free to join the campaign trail, as he is not a threat to national security, according to National Security Adviser Roilo Golez.

"As long as he's not buying tanks and military supplies (to finance a coup d'etat), he's not a threat," Golez said at a weekly news forum at the Westin Philippine Plaza.

The national security adviser said the courts had not restricted Estrada's movements.

Like Golez, Senate President Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and Sen. Rodolfo Biazon do not mind if Estrada actively campaigns for opposition candidates.

Pimentel and Biazon believed that he could still bring in the crowds, mostly belonging to the poor.

"His active participation could help the (opposition) slate," Biazon said.

Estrada left for Zamboanga at 11:05 a.m. aboard a chartered Subic Air Lear jet without any fanfare. Nobody sent him off at the Manila Domestic Airport.

Officials of the Air Transportation Office (ATO) doused suspicions that the flight could be diverted out of the country. They said the 8-seat plane touched down at the Pagadian Airport in Zamboanga del Norte at 12:21 p.m.

While Estrada's plane, RP-C1426, is capable of flying to Australia, Singapore, China or Taiwan, it would not be allowed entry into these countries due to the absence of an advanced flight plan, according to acting ATO chief Anacleto Venturina.

For security reasons, Estrada's name was not included in the initial flight plan submitted by Subic Air to ATO. Pilot Jet Villadulit informed the flight operation briefing service of Estrada's inclusion in the flight shortly before takeoff, sources said.

Airport General Manager Edgardo Manda said ATO should impose sanctions on Subic Air for not adhering to the original flight plan.

With Estrada were two photographers and a reporter.

Manda, who drew flak for monitoring the arrival of Estrada's daughter Jackie Ejercito-Lopez and husband Beaver from Hong Kong Friday night, ordered airport personnel to extend courtesy to the former President.

To avoid drawing attention, Estrada's car entered the domestic airport through the gate of the Subic International Air Club Inc. at the corner of Domestic Road and Andrews Avenue instead of the main gate on Domestic Road.

Two motorcycle-riding policemen escorted Estrada's car. *With reports from AFP and AP*

Jail farthest from Erap's mind

(From page A1)

France Presse that prison was farthest from his mind.

He insisted he would get his "legal and historical vindication" when the Supreme Court eventually rules on his suit challenging Vice President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's assumption of the presidency. *(See related story on Page 1.)*

"I can't even imagine," Estrada told AFP on Monday night when asked if he thought about his possible arrest. "How could I dream about it when I can't even imagine myself going to jail?"

He described as "figments of the imagination" the charges filed against him by various nongovernment organizations in the Office of the Ombudsman.

The new government, however, insists Estrada has lost his presidential immunity from prosecution and must stand trial for plunder, for which death is the maximum penalty.

Cooped up inside his mansion at No. 1 Polk Street in Greenhills, San Juan, since Jan. 20, he padded around his home in beige leather slippers, looking pale and with streaks of gray showing in his bouffant hairdo.

Shaking his head, Estrada maintained he merely "decided to step down temporarily to avoid bloodshed," adding he had no regrets over the course of action he took.

He said the Catholic Church as well as "rich people," including local media barons, had waged a "hate campaign" against him and conspired to topple him.

"Their intention is to discredit me all the way so that I'll have no chance of coming back," Estrada said, his right arm still adorned with his signature white terrycloth wristband with the blue presidential coat of arms.

The 63-year-old former movie star, however, said he remained open to a peaceful, political co-existence with Ms Macapagal whatever the Supreme Court ruling.

"If the acting President is performing well and the economy is booming, why should I replace her? I'll support her instead," he said.

His tummy still bulges, but he appears to have shriveled, having lost 25 pounds (by his own count) since the "Juetengate" scandal broke four months ago.

Better known for his hard living and many mistresses, Estrada said his "carbo diet" did the trick. "I also do my calisthenics and take a sauna bath every day," he added.

Estrada said he was sleeping well—"at least five hours a day."

Soldiers still guard him, though none are in uniform. He has also retained a small civilian staff, as well as top-notch lawyers. A waiter from a popular restaurant chain takes orders for drinks.

A steady stream of political supporters still pays him visits, but his circle of friends is growing ever smaller.

Many have fled abroad to escape prosecution, and at least three have promised to testify against him, including Carlos Arellano, a boyhood friend who previously managed the Social Security System.

Estrada said he harbored no ill will against them. "I don't feel anything because all of them are being intimidated and threatened, and they have no choice but to save themselves," he said.

Ombudsman

For his part, Ombudsman Aniano Desierto has nothing in mind but to see Estrada tried in the Sandiganbayan for plunder, graft and corruption, bribery and a slew of other charges.

Desierto yesterday issued a one-day ultimatum to three banks where Estrada, former first lady Dr. Luisa "Loi" Ejercito, and his mistresses allegedly kept secret bank accounts.

Desierto said the Allied Bank, Asia United Bank and Citibank had until today to submit the pertinent bank records in accordance with the subpoena he had issued as part of the Ombudsman's investigation of the alleged ill-gotten wealth of Estrada, his wife and mistresses.

"Failure to do so would mean refusal on the part of bank officials to cooperate with us in our ongoing investigation on the complaint for forfeiture of Estrada's assets," he said.

Should officials of the three banks continue to defy the subpoena, Desierto warned he would be forced to file charges of obstruction of justice against them.

The bank officials could also be charged with money laundering, he added.

Desierto, however, said Estrada's still unresolved petition in the Supreme Court had made the three banks reluctant to turn over the bank records.

"It's the uncertainty posed by the claim of Mr. Estrada to the presidency now pending with the high court," he said.

According to him, bank officials earlier told him they would only comply with the subpoena only after the resolution of the case.

Eight banks earlier complied with the subpoena. These are International Exchange Bank, Metrobank, Security Bank and Trust Co., United Coconut Planters Bank, Philippine Savings Bank, Equitable PCI Bank, United Overseas Bank and Citibank N.A.

Allied Bank, owned by business tycoon Lucio Tan, has refused to furnish the Ombudsman its records of Estrada's accounts, saying the Foreign Currency Deposit Act barred the government from scrutinizing foreign currency accounts.

But Desierto said the FCDA prohibition only covered accounts of foreigners.

Citibank earlier furnished the Ombudsman with Dr. Loi Ejercito's statements of accounts but failed to turn over additional bank records of Estrada and his other mistresses.

Citibank records showed that the former first lady had deposited a total of P111.6 million into her three accounts with the bank from July 1, 1998 until January this year.

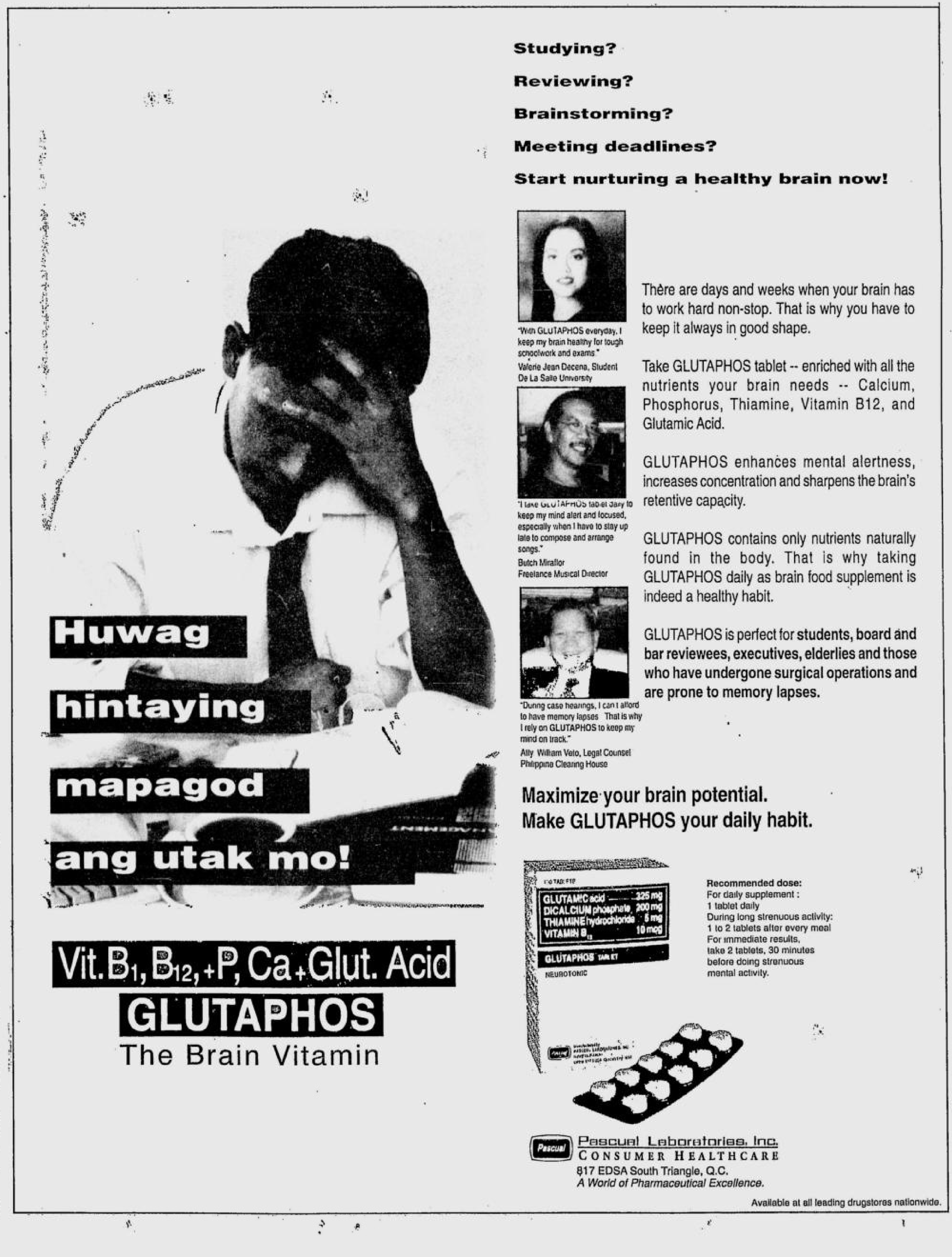
Only P1.4 million was left of the three accounts, according to the bank records.

Another Estrada mistress, former movie starlet Laami Enriquez, had a P650-million bank account with PS Bank. Ombudsman investigators said that at one time, Enriquez deposited as much as P80 million into her account.

Nothing was left of the P650-million account. Enriquez, however, maintained smaller accounts with PS Bank, according to Desierto.

Desierto said the ongoing investigation of the bank accounts was not covered by a recent Supreme Court order.

"The Ombudsman maintains that the order only refers to six previous complaints and not on the complaint for forfeiture, which is still in its fact-finding stage, as well as new cases which will be filed against Estrada," he said. *Reports from AFP and Michael Lim Ubac*



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PSC taps Lydia as consultant

DE VEGA

By June Navarro

FORMER Asian sprint queen Lydia de Vega-Mercado will be back to showcase her skills on the track. But this time, she will be working as the Philippine Sports Commission's top consultant in athletics.

Struck by grief after her 4-year-old son John Michael was killed in a vehicular accident two weeks ago, De Vega was tapped by the PSC to bolster the agency's grassroots development program in athletics.

Starting tomorrow, she will start working as athletics' chief consultant under the office of Commissioner William Ramirez, who is at the helm of the PSC's grassroots and mass-based projects like the Batang Pinoy Games.

PSC Chair Carlos Tuason said Lydia's outstanding record and vast experience in the track would be of big help in promoting the PSC's thrust in athletics at the grassroots level.

Lydia's primary task is to scout budding talents and evaluate the abilities of athletics instructors in the countryside.

"We want Lydia to help us scout for athletics potentials so that we can begin training them at a tender age to expand our talent pool before turning them over to the track and field association for further development," said Tuason.

Meanwhile, Quintellano "Tiny" Literal's Basketball Association of the Philippines will remain housed inside the PSC building until after the PSC solve the legal impediments of its eviction notice.

Urged to move out by the PSC, Literal yesterday asked for a reconsideration, saying the Southeast Asian Basketball Association, which the country will be hosting, will be in peril once his BAP vacates its premises within the Philippine Sports Commission building.

He also said legal stumbling blocks questioning Freddie Jalasco's assumption to power as the one recognized by the Philippine Olympic Committee would prevent the PSC from enforcing its directive.

The Seaba will run from April 2-7 with six countries, including the Philippines, participating. Literal said the venue would be announced later.

Tuason referred Literal's appeal to the Office of Government Corporate Counsel headed by lawyer Allan Yap in a move that Tuason said would exonerate the PSC from contempt of court.

In another development, karatedo got the first crack on the PSC's "one trip per national sports association policy" prior to the Kuala Lumpur Southeast Asian Games in September.

Eight karatekas are strutting their wares in the Asian Invitational Karate Championships in Hong Kong. With free accommodations, Tuason said the PSC only shelled out $5,000 for the delegation.

San Miguel aims to bounce back

Uichico blames self for setback to Mobiline

By Marc Anthony Reyes

PBA STANDINGS

	W	L
San Miguel	4	1
Ginebra	4	2
Shell	4	2
Red Bull	3	2
Purefoods	3	3
Pop Cola	3	3
Mobiline	2	3
Alaska	2	4
Tanduay	2	4
Sta. Lucia	1	4

GAMES TODAY (Philsports)

5:15 p.m.—Sta. Lucia vs Mobiline
7:30 p.m.—SMB vs Red Bull

SAN Miguel Beer coach Jong Uichico is taking the blame for their loss to Mobiline last Saturday but has no regrets over what happened.

In fact, Uichico believes something good might come out of that shocking first loss that would help them against depleted Batang Red Bull in their PBA All Filipino Cup game at Philsports.

The league-leading Beermen, who suffered their defeat at the hands of the struggling Phone Pals (83-71) in San Fernando, Pampanga, hope to remain on top against the Thunder who will miss injured Mick Pennisi.

In the first game, Mobiline aims for a back-to-back win against cellar-dweller Sta. Lucia Realty in the 5:15 p.m. match.

"Now we are facing another depleted team, I hope we won't commit the same mistakes again," Uichico told the INQUIRER yesterday. "I'm sure we learned a lot, both the players and the coaching staff."

He said his decision to stick with one-on-one defense against Mobiline's big men and the team's reliance to win the game using sheer offense cost them the loss.

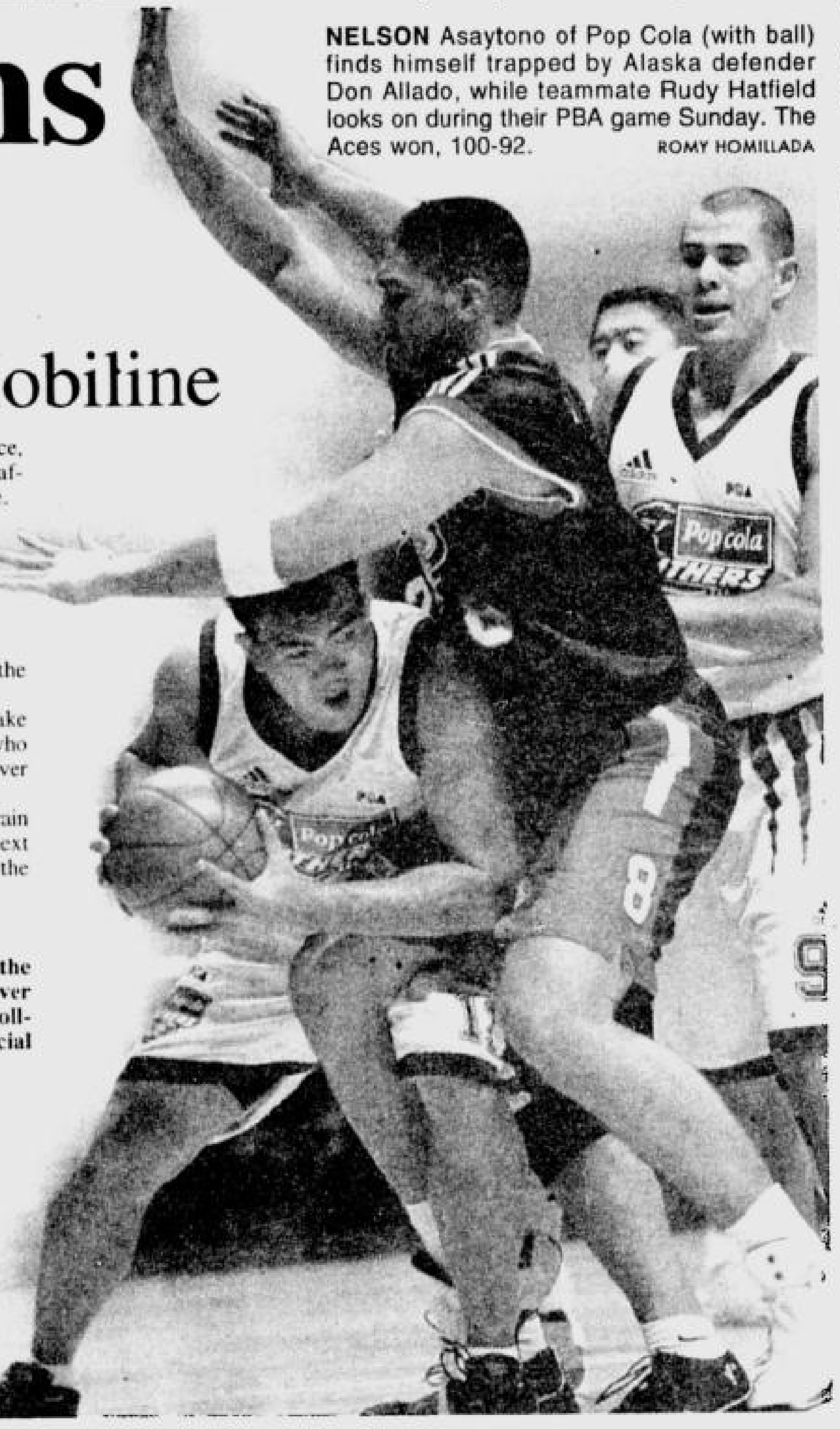
"It's not the real San Miguel," said Uichico. "We tried to outscore them instead of outplaying them. We have to get back to basics."

Uichico admitted reports of their overwhelming advantage in experience, manpower and organization have affected their attitude toward the game.

"If you keep on hearing that over and over again, it gets into your head. Maybe it has gotten into our heads and we should take that away as soon as possible," said Uichico. "It's impossible to have an unbeaten record here in the PBA these days."

At any rate, the Beermen will stake their 4-1 record against the Thunder who carry a 3-2 card and a lot of anguish over their 71-66 loss to Tanduay Gold.

Pennisi suffered a severe ankle sprain and might be unable to play for the next two months, leaving a huge hole in the Thunder's frontline.



NELSON Asaytono of Pop Cola (with ball) finds himself trapped by Alaska defender Don Allado, while teammate Rudy Hatfield looks on during their PBA game Sunday. The Aces won, 100-92. ROMY HOMILLADA

THE RENEWAL of ties between the PBA and Burlington Socks will cover the regular television ads and roll-tech participation while the official title remains under negotiation.

Angeles new Prisaa finals venue

THE NATIONAL finals of the Private Schools Athletic Association will be held as scheduled, but in a different venue.

A Prisaa insider said Angeles City, Pampanga, will take over the staging of the meet from March 6-11 after original host Dagupan City backed out due to time and financial constraints.

Competition will be held at Angeles University, which hosted the Luzon cluster meet recently.

Around 3,000 athletes and officials are expected to converge in Angeles for the national finals featuring competitions in athletics, swimming, taekwondo, basketball, chess, baseball, lawn tennis, volleyball and table tennis.

Central Visayas, which topped the Visayas cluster, and National Capital Region, to be represented by athletes from the UAAP and NCAA, are sure to compete.

The Prisaa, which has produced some of the country's best athletes, is headed by Dr. Emmanuel Angeles of Angeles University. *Roy Luarca*

76ers get 2nd loss in a row

PHILADELPHIA — Ray Allen ruined an impressive home debut by Dikembe Mutombo, scoring a career-high 42 points to lead the Milwaukee Bucks over the Philadelphia 76ers, 98-91, in the NBA Monday night.

Mutombo had 21 points and 16 rebounds in his third game with the Sixers, but he didn't make much of a difference in the fourth quarter when Allen took over, scoring 21 points.

Milwaukee ended a six-game losing streak against the Sixers.

Glenn Robinson added 19 points and Sam Cassell had 17 for the Bucks, who won their fifth in a row.

Allen Iverson, who missed 14 of his first 16 shots, finished with 26 points for the Sixers, who dropped their second straight.

Hornets 82, Pacers 72

In Charlotte, North Carolina, Jamal Mashburn had 24 points and 11 rebounds as Charlotte won its fourth straight.

Both teams had terrible shooting nights, with the Hornets making only 35 percent of their shots, while the Pacers shot 34 percent.

David Wesley added 13 points and Elden Campbell had 11 points and nine rebounds for Charlotte.

Jalen Rose had 26 points and Reggie Miller added 24 as the Pacers had their four-game winning streak snapped.

Celtics 85, SuperSonics 82

In Boston, Antoine Walker had 25 points and 13 rebounds as Boston snapped a four-game losing streak.

Paul Pierce scored 24 points for Boston, which won its sixth straight home game and swept the season series from Seattle for the first time since 1991-92.

Seattle, which has one victory since the All-Star break, lost for the seventh time in 10 games.

Shammond Williams led the Sonics with 21 points and Gary Payton added 20 points, eight rebounds and six assists. Patrick Ewing had 11 points and 11 rebounds.

Jazz 99, Hawks 82

In Salt Lake City, Karl Malone had 21 points and eight rebounds as Utah beat Atlanta for the seventh straight time at the Delta Center.

John Stockton had 14 points and 10 assists as Utah won for the fifth time in six games. Bryon Russell added 13 points and Donyell Marshall, Olden Polynice and Danny Manning each had 10 for the Jazz.

Jason Terry scored 22 points for Atlanta, which lost its fourth straight. Alan Henderson had 18 points and a career-high six steals, and Nazr Mohammed scored a career-high 16 points.

Meanwhile, St. Louis looks to be out of the running to get the NBA's Vancouver Grizzlies, leaving New Orleans, Anaheim and Louisville as possible new homes for the financially troubled team.

Grizzlies owner Michael Heisley told the Vancouver Sun over the weekend that it was "not a real high probability" his team would move to St. Louis.

Bill Laurie, the owner of the NHL's St. Louis Blues, tried to buy the Grizzlies for $ 200 million last year, with the intention of moving the team to St. Louis. But the NBA intervened, and the franchise was sold to Heisley for $ 160 million. *AP*

COMPLETE RESULTS

Boston 85, Seattle 82; Charlotte 82, Indiana 72; Milwaukee 98, Philadelphia 91; Portland 95, Houston 89; Golden State 85, Chicago 78; Utah 99, Atlanta 82; Orlando 93, Denver 86; Dallas 103, L.A. Clippers 92. *AP*

Tampered records?

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

SENSING something fishy, my sources are worried over persistent reports that there might have been "tampering" of records in the tragic case of four-year-old John Michael Mercado who was killed by a wayward passenger jeepney in Project 4 recently.

John Michael's parents, legendary sprinter Lydia de Vega and Meralco engineer Paolo Mercado, have pardoned the driver, but it seems that the operator of the jeepney transferred the ownership of the vehicle to the driver to avoid responsibility. The transfer is suspicious, it may have been antedated.

I also learned that the office of lawyer Leonard de Vera, a Letran alumnus who participated in People Power II, will give his services—for free—and coordinate with the legal department of Meralco to investigate the case.

De Vera has advised John Michael's parents to let the law decide the case of the gruesome death of their son to "serve as a lesson to reckless drivers."

The parents, on the other hand, are pardoning in the eyes of the Lord, their reason is there is no way to return the life of a child, and by so doing, relieve them for their grief. As Paolo said, "If the grief is always in their hearts, it will only hurt them."

* * *

PROUD MOMENTS. Former Philippine Soap Box Derby champion and now Quezon City councilor Julian Coseteng has authored an ordinance banning the dangerous sport of motor vehicle racing and speed testing in the street of the city. Good move. It's time to stop these illegal activities because of the growing number of casualties specially in the White Plains and Libis area.

By the way, I have been keeping track of the career of Julian Coseteng and the other past champions of the youth-oriented Philippine Soap Box Derby which I revived in 1983. And although I have not seen these racers in years, it warms my heart to know that the products of this sports program have done pretty well in their adult life. Then a shy 10-year-old racer, Julian, son of Sen. Nikki Coseteng, won the junior division of the Soap Box Derby while 12-year-old Jon Jon Abadilla, son of the late Col. Rolando Abadilla, chief of the dreaded Metrocom, now defunct, topped the senior category. Jon Jon is an executive of the family-owned bus company at present... Kudos, too, to Tac Padilla, son of my esteemed friend, Olympic shooter Tom Ong, for shining the brightest in the recent shooting tryouts for the Philippine team to the SEA Games in Kuala Lumpur this September. Tac, 36-year-old general manager of Spring Cooking Oil, won the rapid fire (576 points), standard pistol (563) and center fire (567) events of the elimination matches held at the PSC range in Fort Bonifacio.

* * *

SPORTS TRIVIA. Host Brazil won the fourth World Basketball Championship in Rio de Janeiro in 1963, but runner-up Yugoslavia served notice as the new emerging power in basketball. In the final round, Yugoslavia defeated the United States, 75-73; Puerto Rico, 73-57; Italy, 85-74; France, 99-63; and the Soviet Union, 69-67, while losing to Brazil, 90-71, for a 5-1 win-loss record. The Brazilians swept the finals, posting a 6-0 slate topped by a nerve-frazzling 85-81 win over the Americans in their final game. Halftime score was 39-all.

In 1966 in Uruguay, a general election reset the world tournament for the following year. The fifth WBC was held in Montevideo on May 27-June 11, 1967 amidst freezing point weather. Games were played in an old cylinder-shaped building which was called the "frigidaire." The players were provided with electric heaters, but table officials had to sit on cold cement seats. As a result, a Hungarian table official started wearing a light coat and shirt, came in sweaters the next day and, much later, in heavy overcoat. And to further keep himself warm, he brought along a bottle of rum which he shared with other officials. The Soviet Union won the title, with Yugoslavia finishing second.

* * *

For inquiries, call fax/phone (044) 933-1214.

Record posted in drag racing

RAYMOND Go of Team Autoplus made history last Saturday at the Manila Harbor Center Super Dragway when he broke the 11-second barrier and became the first Filipino to land in the 10-second drag time zone.

The fastest car national record, set during the Philippine Drag Racing Familysport's (PDRF) Battle by the Bay, now stands at 10.869 seconds at 135.13 mph in the quarter-mile. Go backed the much-awaited record run with a 10.920 at 134.72 mph.

In an earlier unofficial pass, he scorched a blistering 10.866 at 135.13 mph. His jaw-dropping passes, in a turbocharged Honda Civic hatchback, were clocked by the Philippine Motor Association.

Go, assisted by Team Autoplus' Latin American tuners Joe Alaniz and Francisco Blanco, shattered the previous records of Redline Racing's Dondi Montecillo (11.057) and Matonetics' Mato Tan (11.075). PDRF awarded him an P8,800 cash prize.

The second PDRF Battle by the Bay drag race event was supported by track owners Manila Headers, Outlast Batteries, C.A. Roque Machine Shop and Monster Radio RX-93.1.

Aside from the record setting feat, Go also bagged the Quick 8 and All-Blown Cars championships.

Motorsports show set

THE MUCH-AWAITED TV sports show "Speed" will celebrate its third season with a new time slot, 11 p.m., every Monday on PTV 4.

Sponsored by Marlboro, Toyota, Gulf Oil, Tiger Beer, Max Fried Chicken, Hotwheels, No Fear, BLTBCo and MP Turbo, the show still retains its usual mix of exciting motorsports action and various extreme sports.

"We are happy that Speed will now be on its third season," said Mike Potenciano, the show's host and producer.

"Speed" still boasts of its celebrity co-hosts, Monching Gutierrez and Manoy Llige, both participants in the various motorsports events that the show has covered with Monching taking the championship in the Novice division of the BF Goodrich Challenge Cup and Manoy landing fourth.

The MP Turbo Racing Team, sister company of "Speed," took top honors for Shell in the Formula Toyota Team-Novice Class, the Philippine Junior Touring Car Championship and the Production Car Championship. Those were dominated by Baguio driver Carlos Anton, one of the protogés of team MP Turbo.

This Monday's episode will showcase the exciting final leg of the Shell Superbike series and the Formula Toyota in Batangas. The off-track segment will highlight the sport of underwater hockey.

Foals of 2000

FOALS OF 2000

SIRE	NO. OF FOALS
CONQUISTAROSE	28
KHOZAAM	25
HEZA GONE WEST	24
HAZM	23
EL RAGGAAS	20
PAY PER VIEW	19
FREE WATER	18
MEDIUM COOL	16
DEPUTY CHAIRMAN	13
DISCONNECT	13
SLEW'S FOLLY	13
YONDER	13
PERISCOPE	12
RINDO INDY	12
STRIKE TOO	11
THUNDER VIC	11
CLASSIC CABOOSE	10
MUSHI MUSHI	10
BARRANTES	9
HEART OF ARABIA	9
PENROD	9
TREASURE CAY	9
BURNING LAD	8
GUT FEEL	8
HOMBRE	8
JAMES OSCAR	8
LIOUBOVNIK	8
MIRACULOUS EDITION	8
PERFECT HALO	7
SNOWY OWL	7

WHAT CAN I SAY

Bebo Quiros

THE ABOVE mentioned 30 sires were responsible for 77% of the foal crop of 491 or 379 foals. Another 102 foals were sired by 43 other stallions with foal crops ranging from one to six foals apiece. The futility of looking for a needle in a haystack is best exemplified by 19 stallions having a solitary foal.

The success story in terms of sire power will come from the support of breeders belonging to what we call "breeding hubs". The Sandy Javier stallion combine of Hazm (23 foals), Lioubouvnik (8), Gut Feel (8), Hombre (8), Perfect Halo (7), Snowy Owl (7), Trading Range (5) generated a total of 64 foals. 66 foals were sired by Mesa Stud Farm stallions Conquistarose (28), Khozaam (25), Treasurer Cay (9) and Aimaam (4). The Santos brothers rely on Free Water (18), Medium Cool (16), Slew's Folly (13), Marangal (2), Sun Dance (2) and Professor Blue (1), for 52 foals, while their cousin Tito de Jesus' farm boasts of Yonder (13) and Ricky P (3) for a group total of 67 foals.

Another significant breeding hub is that managed by Albert Yam with Heza Gone West (24), El Raggaas (20), Stone God (5) and Say the Truth (1) leading the way with 50 foals. The Floreindo Stud operations have 30 foals by Strike Too (11), Thunder Vic (11) and James Oscar (8). The Tarlac operations of Kuya Peping Cojuangco boasts of 24 foals by Classic Caboose (10), Heart of Arabia (9), Handaan (4) and Lauriat (1). Nel Velasco's Pay Per View sired 19 foals while the Tagle/Puyat farm foundation sires Rindo Indy (12) and Strong Material (4) managed 16 foals.

One can be sure that another Silver Story will be found within this crop of foals. Sire power is one thing. The strength of a farm's broodmare band is another. At the end of the day, pedigree is key.

S.O.S.

At the recent Philtobo Gintong Lahi Awards Night, we had a chance to catch up with MJCI director Martin "Mart" Cepeda. After exchanging pleasantries and trading political gossip, Mart let on that the racing schedule set up by San Lazaro was taking its toll on the horse population, race cards were lean and trainers continued to gravitate towards Sta. Ana. Again, we suggested that it was time to consider the importation of race fillies not only to refill racing stables in need of healthy animals but eventually to augment broodmare bands after their racing careers.

We told him about the request of Philracom commissioner Ramon Balatbat for information on how to import 500 horses. The query was supposed to have emanated from Atty. Alfonso "Boy" Reyes himself, which query was conveyed to us at Jason Lim's wedding celebration. He did confirm MJCI's predicament. As a consequence, we asked him to host a roundtable discussion between the racing and breeding sectors as well as the Philracom. As per the invitation to Philtobo, lunch will have been served at the MJCI Turf Room on Tuesday 27 February. We are hopeful that all sectors will be in attendance.

The racing sector has to accept the fact that the breeding sector cannot produce the number of runners needed to keep the sport of racing interesting. In the previous section, only a half of those foals will ever see a racetrack, only a third will survive into their junior year, most will have been crippled before they turn five. For Philtobo directors Eric Tagle and Raymund Puyat, we feel a certain hopelessness in their attempt to build a world-class racecourse, even in joint venture with whomever, if the backstretch make-up is primarily composed of third world walking wounded. The time to make a quantum leap into the future is now.

SPORTS

AL S. MENDOZA, Editor ▪ EDWIN M. VILLANUEVA, Assistant Editor

Norman, Kafelnikov advance

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates—Magnus Norman of Sweden defeated American Jeff Tarango in a comfortable 73-minute, 6-4, 6-4 victory and Russia's Yevgeny Kafelnikov beat Slava Dosedel of the Czech Republic 7-6 (7-3), 6-2 in Monday's first round of tennis at the $1 million ATP Dubai Duty Free Men's Open. *AP*

Salud paces NCA derby

WINNING Time-DVH of popular lawyer-sportsman Rudy Salud scored three straight wins yesterday to lead the star-studded field going into tonight's four-cock finals of the NCA (National Cockers Association) 7-Cock Derby at the Araneta Coliseum. Four others posted a clean 3-0 slate in the derby hosted by Gerry Fevidal, Ruel Ricafort and Alex Escalona. These were Mar. 6-8 Ucap of hotelier Biboy Enriquez, San Pablo Heat of Blandy Tolentino, Geran of Gerry Fevidal and Capitan I of John Capinpin.

PAL INTERCLUB

Canlubang leads field by 10

CEBU City Mayor Alvin Garcia hits one of the ceremonial balls.

JESS YUSON

BY AL S. MENDOZA
Sports Editor

CEBU CITY—Defending champion Canlubang started poorly but still stormed to a 10-point lead over perennial rival Luisita in yesterday's blastoff of the 54th PAL Interclub at Danao's Club Filipino de Cebu.

The Sugar Barons from Laguna had a 127 against the 117 of the Sweeties from Tarlac in a start that destroyed pre-tournament predictions.

Top seed Manila Southwoods fumbled with a 112, 15 points behind Canlubang, as the Woodsmen from Cavite struggled hole-for-hole at Club Filipino de Cebu, a monster course whose greens are mostly unputtable to even to the best putters in the world.

Juvic Pagunsan's 33 points (3 over) proved to be Canlubang's best, with Jun Bernis shooting 32. Dave Hernandez and Abe Rosal had 31s as Canlubang positioned itself to scoring a rare back-to-back victory.

Canlubang won in Cagayan de Oro last year by a mere 3 points over Luisita after Southwoods prevailed in Davao in 1999 by 29 points over Lanang.

New recruit Jay Bayron, the reigning Uratex Caddies champion from Davao, was Luisita's top scorer with 33 points, followed by old warrior Francis Gaston with 32. Anthony Fernando and Marvin Dumandan had 26s as Iggy Clavecilla's 23 did not count.

Highest pointer

Southwoods' highest pointer was Chucho Martinez with 30, followed by Toru Nakajima with 29, Juami Rocha with 28 and Jun Jun Plana with 25 in the five-to-play, four-to-count format that rewards 3 points to a birdie, 2 to a par and 1 to a bogey.

"*Nakakapit pa*," said Bong Lopez, Southwoods coach. "We were short of our target. *Di bale, sanay naman kaming maghabol.*"

"A lot of things can still happen with still three days left," said Thirdy Escano, Southwoods team captain.

Escano said he will change his lineup for today's Round 2, with Nakajima playing for the second straight day today instead of his original choice, Jerome Delariarte.

The ploy, although not openly admitted by Southwoods coaching staff that also includes Freddie Mendoza, was aimed to reserve Southwoods' top guns in time for Thursday's arrival of Southwoods' top honcho, Bob Sobrepena.

The record field of 71 took its toll on the organizers as eight teams failed to finish their rounds on account of darkness. They are Golfinos, Brookside, Davao, Paga-San Jose, Mt. Malindang, Par Excellence, Victorias and Maharlika.

Host Cebu Country Club and Del Monte shared the lead in the Founders Division with 110 apiece. Riviera was third with 95, Forest Hills fourth and Club Intramuros 84.

Pueblo de Oro of Cagayan de Oro led the Sportswriters Division with 105, followed by Club Filipino de Cebu with 102. Third was Camp Evangelista of Cagayan with 98, followed by South Cotabato with 95 and Mabuhay and Lumbia tied with 89s.

Hole-in-one

Leyte, seniors Friendship Division champion last week , led the Friendship Division highlighted by Gabriel Yap Jr.'s hole-in-one at the 165-yard, third of Cebu Country Club.

Yap won a first-class ticket to the US, plus P10,000 worth of long distance calls from PLDT.

Leyte led with 102, followed by San Juanico with 99 and Iloilo 82.

Other results

Championship—Canlubang 127, Luisita 117, Manila Southwoods 112, Wack Wack 102,Negros 98, Manila Golf 96, Valley 96, John Hay 88, Sydney 77, Alta Vista 73, Greenhills 71, Lanang 71, Vancouver 56, Xiamen 51, Moffett Field 41, Jap-Fil 39.

Founders—Cebu CC 110, Del Monte 110,Riviera 95, Forest Hills 93, Club Intramuros 84, Alabang 80, Apo 79, Iligan 75, Bacolod 72, Villamor 71, Capitol Hills 70, Hawaii 21.

Sportswriters—Crystal Spring 86, Alliance 86 Team L.A. 85, UP Tee Jots 82, Pamplona 82, Mercedes 81, Zamboanga 80, Navy 73, Paoay 72,Baguio 68, Cotabato 67, Washington DC 62, Fil-Am 62, Guinhalaran 60, Rolling Hills 59, Bay Area 59, Seattle 50, Riyadh 46, Riyahd Dirab 46.

Friendship—Leyte 102, San Juanico 99, Iloilo 82, British Columbia 75, Pittsburgh 74, Heritage 72, Going Bananas 62, Skywest 55.

Paging Mayor Garcia

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

CEBU CITY—Bad news. Glicerio Badilles, the many-time chess Olympian, is in a coma at the Perpetual Succor hospital here. I had on many occasions been with Badilles in Olympiad chess tournaments.

"He's in a bad shape," said Bombi Aznar, who was the team captain of the victorious RP Team to the Nice Chess Olympiad (France) where Eugene Torre won his grandmaster title. "I'm praying for his recovery."

The sad part is, I was told that the city government has not lifted a finger in attending to the medical bills of Badilles. A pity. Badilles is a Hall of Famer in Cebu's sports lore. Aznar belonged to the first batch of awardees, followed by Badilles. Badilles is virtually penniless, like most guys I know who have dedicated their lives to chess. If you still don't know, chess is the cruellest sport, mental-wise.

Paging Mayor Alvin Garcia. Help our friend Ising, please?

***

Here's wishing that Tito Eduque recovers soon. My good friend, Butch Marco, tells me that Tito's going under the knife today to declog some "pipes" in his heart.

You have my prayers, Tito.

***

Frankie Miñoza left Singapore a day after he lost the crown at Bhukit course to Vijay Singh. He was leading for two days with 64-61, only to lose what seemed like a vise-grip of the lead in the third round.

Frankie was still actually in the thick of things as he trailed by just one stroke after three rounds with a 71.

But then, he lost control of his game to wind up with a 72 on Sunday.

No, he said, he didn't lose control of his game.

"Suddenly, the putts refused to fall," he said in Tagalog. "*Kung ano iyong ganda sa* first two days, *doon naman sumama ang* putting *sa* last two days."

He said he was charging everything to experience.

"In golf, there are really days when you couldn't sink your putts," he said. "*Sa* last day, *halos lahat ng* putts *ko, pahalik-halik lang sa butas.* If it's not your day, it's not your day."

Still, Frankie found consolation in the fact that his 64-61 was a record for two days at Singapore's Bhukit, breaking the record registered by Tiger Woods some years back. His 61 was also a new mark—again breaking Woods' 62.

***

I've said this before and I'll say it again. Alta Vista is Visayas' best golf course. Tourists, mostly Japanese, flock regularly to this mountain course whose panoramic view of Cebu's bay is simply magnificent.

But then, Cebu Country Club's charm has never diminished.

I rate both courses as almost co-equal, not only for their lovable greens but also for their beautiful layout.

I will not trade both for any of America's golf courses—save for Augusta.

Golf tilt to raise fund for students

JUNIOR Achievement of the Philippine Inc. (J.A. Phils.) will hold its annual "Golf Tournament Classic" on March 2 at the Canlubang Golf and Country Club in Laguna.

J.A. Phils. is a non-stock, non-profit organization formed by the alliance of prominent multinational and local corporations to educate business students about economics, business operations and functions through first-hand experience.

The youth program has been in existence for 32 years although it has maintained a low profile. To date, JA has engaged about 40,000 students from Metro Manila schools in the art of running mini-companies. Last year alone, at least 16 schools participated and 800 students benefited from the venture.

The golf tourney is one of the body's fund-raising activities to support its programs. Organizers seek to raise public awareness on the need to help develop future entrepreneurs through private sector participation.

Some 300 top executives from different companies have invited their associates to play golf with the chief executive officers of sponsoring companies.

Major sponsors of the event are ZMG Signium Ward Howell Philippines, Caltex, Avon Products Mfg., CGU International Insurance, United Laboratories, Citibank N.A., Compaq Computer, Energizer, Fort Bonifacio Development Corp.; IBM, Kraft Foods, Mobil, RCBC Bank and San Miguel Corp.

SPORTS ON TV

COMPILED BY LORENZO MANGUIAT

BASKETBALL: NBA – Seattle Supersonics vs New York Knicks at 9 a.m. (r – 8 p.m.) on ESPN

US NCAA - Tennessee Volunteers vs South Carolina Gamecocks at 1 p.m., Michigan State vs Wisconsin at 4 p.m. on ESPN

GOLF: PGA Nissan Open, Day Three at 8 p.m. (r) on Star Sports

ICE SKATING: NHK Trophy 2000 Highlights #3 at 10 a.m. (r) on Star Sports

CYCLING: Tour of Langkawi 2001, Day #7 Highlights at 7:30 p.m. on Star Sports

TRACK AND FIELD: IAAF Indoor Grand Prix (Stockholm) at 7 p.m. (r) on Star Sports

BOWLING: PBA Bowling at 11:30 a.m. (r) on ESPN

SOCCER: Spanish Football League at 12 noon (r) on Star Sports

Argentine Football Copa Cordoba - Boca Juniors vs River Plate at 11 p.m. on ESPN

TABLE TENNIS: English Open, Finals at 2 p.m. (r) on Star Sports

MOTOR SPORTS: Max Power at 6 p.m. on Star Sports

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

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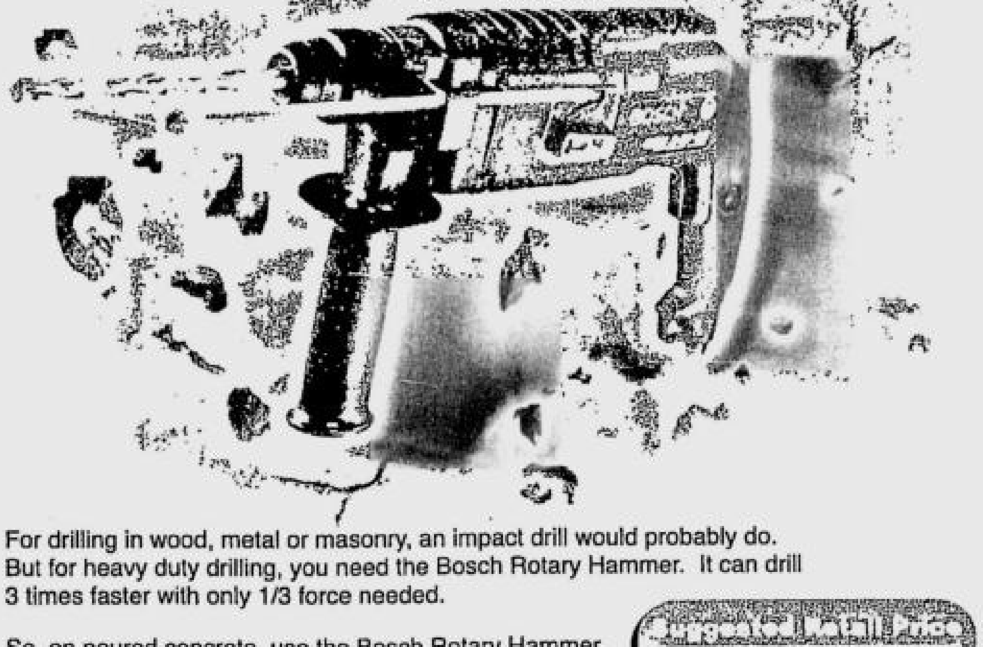

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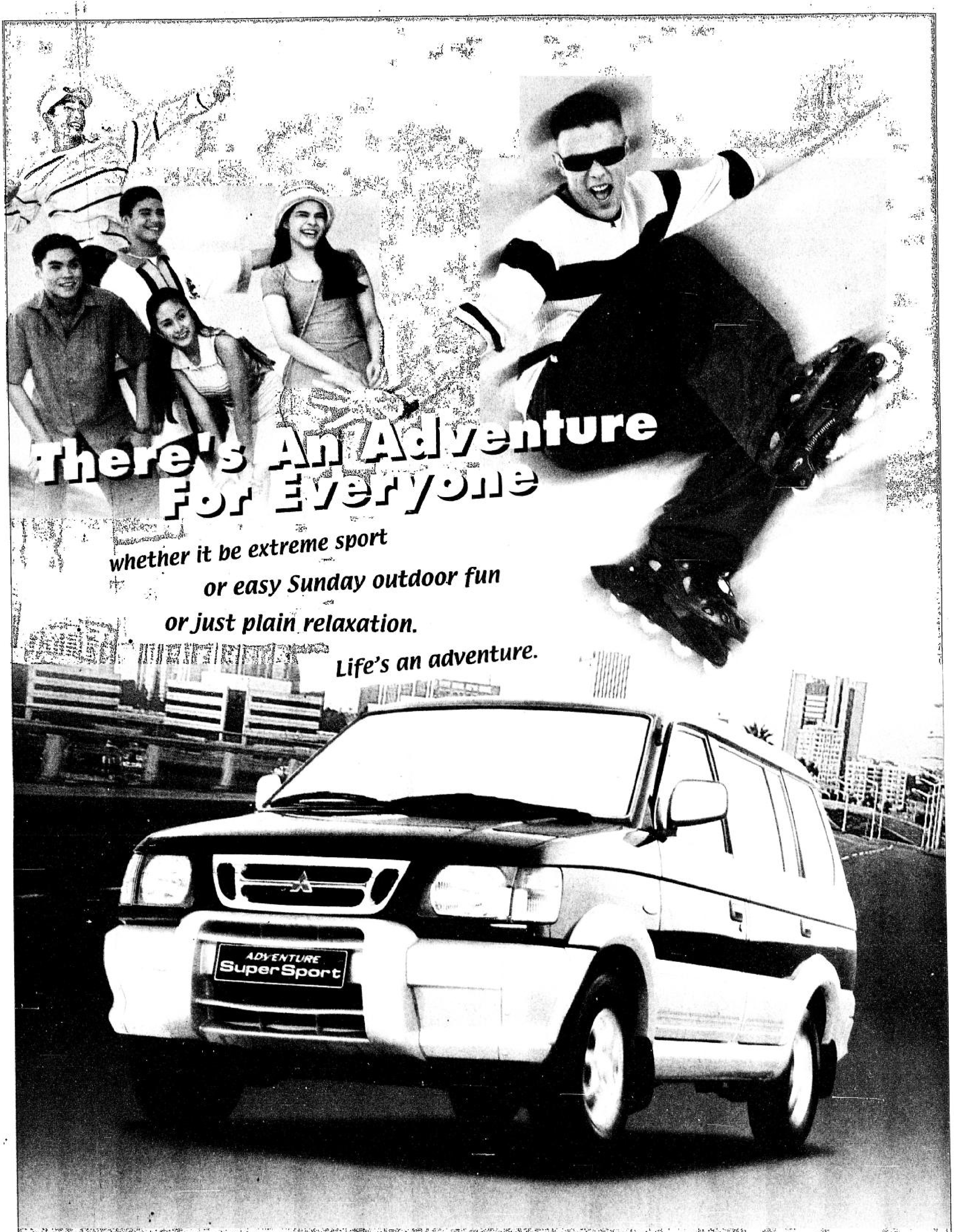
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0388, Series of 2001.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METRO

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

Pinoy, American nabbed for illegal withdrawal of P2.6M from Landbank

By Philip C. Tubeza

FILIPINO James Jay Baker and his American friend tried to make a fast buck reportedly by illegally withdrawing $56,000, or P2.6 million, in foreign remittances from the Landbank of the Philippines.

But Baker's plan backfired and now, the namesake of the former US secretary of state and his friend are behind bars.

Central Police District officers arrested Baker, 22, of White Plains, Quezon City, and American William Donald L. Ryan, 39, of Robinson Apartelle, Edsa, Quezon City, about 1:30 p.m. at the Landbank branch on Aurora Boulevard, Cubao.

The two men passed themselves off as representatives of William Westle Holdings and withdrew $56,000 intended for a certain W.W. Holdings, said Chief Supt. Victor Luga, CPD chief.

A Gerald Thompson and Norman Lao of New York reportedly remitted the funds through the Chase Manhattan Bank of New York, Luga said.

But it turned out W.W. Holdings stood for World Wide Holdings, not William Westle, the CPD chief added.

PINOY/ A24

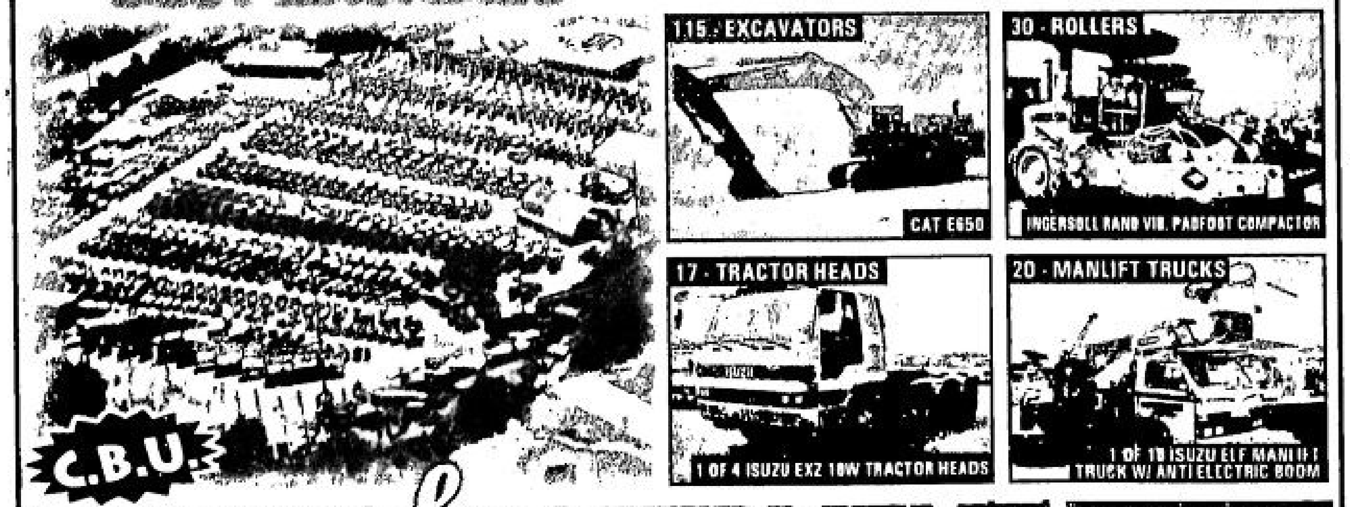
We didn't abandon PICC, say firemen

By Alcuin Papa

FIREMEN are all fired up over the allegations of Senate President Aquilino Pimentel Jr. that firefighters left the Philippine International Convention Center before the fire that hit the Pasay City complex was put out.

Alvin Estrada, spokesperson of the 13,000-strong United Fire Fighters of the Philippines, yesterday said Pimentel was probably referring to volunteer fire fighters because government firemen cannot leave a fire

WE/ A24



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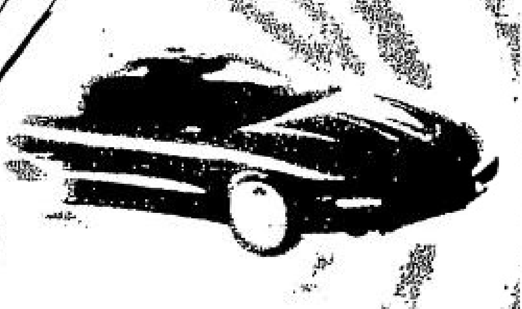

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Malabon man charged with raping 3 nieces

By Christian V. Esguerra

FOR allegedly raping his three nieces—aged 9, 10, and 12—a 33-year-old man is facing charges of rape and three counts of lasciviousness before the Malabon Prosecutor's office.

Police yesterday filed the charges against the man, who is now detained at the Malabon Municipal jail.

No bail was recommended for his temporary release.

Initial investigation by the Malabon Police Station Investigation Bureau showed that the man had been raping the girls since early this year.

Police said the girls were entrusted to their uncle by their parents after their house was demolished.

But about 9 p.m. last Jan. 12 the uncle raped the 12-year-old, who was then alone in the house, police said.

Last Monday, the three girls said their uncle molested them in their house.

They said they did not report the rape to police because their uncle had threatened to kill them. They decided to file charges against their uncle for fear he would sexually abuse them again.

Police said medicolegal examination on the girls showed that the 12-year-old and 10-year-old had lacerations on their genitals, indicating that they had been raped.

Rape cases down for first time since '95–Legarda

A TOTAL of 3,145 rape cases were reported nationwide last year, 32 incidents or one percent less than the 3,177 documented in 1999, Sen. Loren Legarda disclosed over the weekend.

"This marks the first time since 1995 and only the second time since 1990 that rape cases dropped year-on-year," Legarda, an official of the anti-crime Citizens' DrugWatch Foundation, said.

"There are no conclusions that can be readily drawn from the slump, as it marks a very slight and insignificant decline," she pointed out.

"The figures still translate into a daily average of eight to nine rape cases," she said.

Citing Philippine National Police crime statistics, Legarda said rape cases have been increasing by an annual average of five percent since 1990, when only 1,814 incidents were reported.

Among the country's 16 regions, Southern Tagalog still had the most number of rape cases reported last year at 497; followed by Bicol, with 339; Metro Manila, 277; Western Visayas, 247; Central Luzon, 237; Central Visayas, 222; Ilocos, 186; Southern Mindanao, 173;

Western Mindanao, 161; Northern Mindanao, 160; Eastern Visayas and Central Mindanao, 157 each; Cagayan Valley, 131; Caraga, 104; the Cordillera Administrative Region, 85; and the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, 12.

In Metro Manila, the 277 cases reported last year marked a decrease of 57 incidents or 17 percent compared to the 334 documented in 1999. Six other regions posted year-on-year declines in rape cases.

The Bureau of Corrections put four convicted rapists to death by lethal injection between February 1999 and January 2000.

Of the 1,663 inmates on death row as of Jan. 31 this year, Legarda said, 876 or 52 percent are condemned rapists, including 400 incestuous rapists and 76 who murdered their victims.

Boy killed as jeep plows through 'patintero' game

A SEVEN-YEAR-OLD boy was killed after a speeding jeepney plowed through a group of children playing *patintero* on a street in Tondo, Manila late Sunday afternoon.

Nervin Tagulaw, a resident of Rada Street, Tondo, died on the spot after being hit by the jeepney (DSR-123) driven by Alberto Gaba, 26, of Sampaloc, Manila.

Supt. Robert de la Rosa, city traffic police chief, said Tagulaw and several children were playing *patintero* on Wagas Street when the accident took place around 5:45 p.m.

The jeepney suddenly appeared on the north-bound lane and the children ran to the sidewalks to avoid the vehicle.

Tagulaw, police said, either panicked or became confused and could not quickly decide what direction to run to. He was hit by the jeepney, his body going under one of the front wheels.

Gaba surrendered to authorities after the accident. He is detained at the traffic police headquarters in the Port Area, and will be charged with murder resulting in homicide. *Jerome Aning*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

February 28, 2000
Ash Wednesday

1st Reading:	**Joel 2:12-18**
2nd Reading:	**2 Cor 5:20—6:2**
Gospel:	**Mt 6:1-6, 16-18**

Jesus said to his disciples, "Be careful not to make a show of your righteousness before people." If you do so, you do not gain anything from your Father in heaven. When you give something to the poor, do not have it trumpeted before you, as do those who want to be seen in the synagogues and in the streets in order to be praised by the people. I assure you, they have been already paid in full.

If you give something to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your gift remains really secret. Your Father who sees what is kept secret, will reward you.

When you pray, do not be like those who want to be seen. They love to stand and pray in the synagogues or on street corners to be seen by everyone. I assure you, they have already been paid in full. When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father who,is with you in secret; and your Father who sees what is kept secret will reward you.

When you fast, do not put on a miserable face as do the hypocrites. They put on a gloomy face, so people can see they are fasting. I tell you this: they have paid in full already. When you fast, wash your face and make yourself look cheerful, because you are not fasting for appearances or for people, but for your Father who sees beyond appearances. And your Father, who sees what is kept secret will reward you."

Commentary

On this first day of Lent, the clarion call is once again clear: Turn back to the Lord, by turning back to others! This is the time to sift as well the motives that propel our lives. Are they God's? Or are they simply what is me or mine? Even the many acts of piety we do or plan to do this Lent could be simply self-serving if we are not mindful of our deep-seated intentions. Let the apostolic exhortation resound: "Now is the acceptable time! Now is the day of salvation!" Be free from yourself, so that you can be free for others and for the completely Other One, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

REMEDIAL LAW (EVIDENCE)—Private documents require proof of due execution and authentication—A painstaking perusal of the testimony of the prosecution's sole witness reveals, however, that the due execution and authenticity of the documents were never proved. In fact, the prosecution took no effort to prove the due execution and authenticity of these documents during the presentation of their sole eyewitness. Absent such proof, these documents are incompetent as evidence. It is elementary that this Court cannot rightly appreciate firsthand the genuineness of an unverified and unidentified document; much less accord it evidentiary value. Moreover, the documents submitted are mere photocopies of the originals. Thus, they are secondary evidence and as such are not admissible unless there is ample proof of the loss of the originals. However, the loss of the originals have not been proved by the prosecution, neither have they shown that the original is a public record in the custody of a public office or is recorded in a public office, nor that the same is in the custody or under the control of petitioners. The due execution and authenticity of the documentary evidence presented not having been proved, and since these are mere photocopies, the loss of the originals of which was not previously established, the same are clearly inadmissible in evidence. Being incompetent evidence, the only evidence the prosecution could rely on to prove petitioners' guilt would be the sole testimony of the private complainant. Unsupported by any other evidence, said testimony is insufficient to sustain a finding of culpability. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Melo, Third Division, Ong v. People, G.R. No. 140904, October 9, 2000]

Digest by R.B. Vera

We're 'solidly behind' Agarao, says CAV group

By Dona Pazzibugan

THE FOUNDING officers of the Crusade Against Violence (CAV) have given their full support to the group's beleaguered president Carina Agarao, who was earlier accused by a breakaway group of the organization of financial wrongdoing.

Four of the founders who formed the group on Aug. 21, 1991 said in a statement they issued earlier that Agarao, widow of lawyer Clarence Agarao, does not handle CAV funds and could not be responsible for their misuse.

CAV chair Gerarda Villa, widow of founding chair Romy Villa, signed the statement.

"The officers and members of the CAV stand solidly behind Mrs. Carina Agarao," the statement said. "Her selfless dedication to the organization is worth emulating and we commend her for upholding at all times the ideals of the organization."

Earlier, the breakaway group, Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption (VACC) headed by Dante Tan, claimed Agarao could not account for P1 million from the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) given the group during the Ramos administration and P250,000 from then Vice President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

AGARAO

Agarao herself had denied the accusations and said that when she assumed the presidency of the CAV, the first thing she did was transfer financial management from her office to the office of the chair and the treasurer.

She also said that Ms Macapagal gave CAV only P100,000 and not P250,000, as a personal donation of the family.

Signatories to the statement also include Anders Hultman, whose stepdaughter Maureen was killed by Claudio Teehankee Jr.; Grace Maguan-See, whose brother Eldon was gunned down by businessman Rolito Go; and Ernestina Bernabe-Carbajal.

CAV chair Villa lost her son Leny to hazing rites of the Aquila Legis in the early '90s. The death of the young Villa led to the reimposition of the death penalty in 1997.

"Grace Maguan-See (can) attest to the fact that Mrs. Agarao never handled the funds of CAV contrary to what VACC wants the public to believe," Villa said. "Mrs. Agarao handles only the operational side of the CAV.

"It is the height of desperation when people have to disguise themselves in order to be believed," she added, referring to the VACC members.

Agarao recently came under fire from former members of the CAV following her vigorous protests against the appointment of Philippine National Police chief Leandro Mendoza.

The former CAV members, who are now members of the VACC, called for Agarao's resignation due to alleged fund misuse.

The VACC led by ex-CAV chair Jimenez and another CAV founder, Lauro Vizconde, supported Mendoza's appointment and castigated Agarao for her protests.

Agarao and Teresita Ang-See, head of the Citizens Action Against Crimes, vigorously objected to Mendoza's appointment.

Agarao claimed that Mendoza orchestrated the escape of the gunman in the murder of her husband Clarence. Ang-See said Mendoza had been implicated in past kidnappings, the same accusation now being leveled against his predecessor, Panfilo Lacson.

Mendoza and Lacson had denied the accusations.

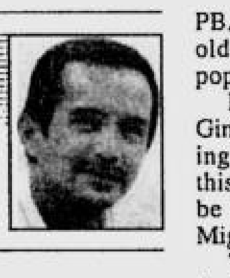
Interior Secretary Joey Lina recently cleared Mendoza of the charges and said Agarao and Ang-See failed to provide a substantial basis for his recall.

But Villa said the accusations against Agarao were part of an "orchestrated drive to destroy the good name of our president."

"We ask everyone to respect her and stop all these senseless innuendoes which seek to lessen her credibility as a crusader of justice," she said. "In all her years as CAV president she did nothing but help (other) victims. The least we can do is to allow her to keep her good name."

Ginebra out to reclaim old copyright

BARE EYE



Recah Trinidad

(RAGE: He was mad, still in a rage, complained Mike Anonas of Palanan, Makati. He, just like most other fathers around, has a small kid. And he could not get over the shock of Lydia de Vega losing her son John Michael because of the greed and irresponsibility of a jeepney driver. Nothing wrong with Lydia and husband Paulo offering to forgive. But he said that driver, who had strayed off the route, should be put in his proper place. We cannot just forgive and forget, Mr. Anonas said, authorities must do something right away because experience tells us these dirty drivers won't ever change their rotten ways. Our kids will forever run the risk of being crushed to death….Still on that tragedy: It was an empty can of milk, and not a can of empty milk, which I meant in that last column. Sorry for that silly slip….Mark Caguioa, young Ginebra team torch bearer, doesn't have a single drop of Yankee blood in his veins. He's a native of riverside Vergara in Mandaluyong, who left and settled down in California with his pure Pinoy parents when he was only 10.)

* * *

NICE to see and hear that they still produce big-hearted superstars in the PBA. I mean here brave, selfless hardcourt soldiers who don't care much about glamour, astronomic salaries and fancy plays but who dare to risk injury just to save possession and stay on track for a win.

Barangay Ginebra's strongest start in years is a product of a brave, old philosophy that, after being buried and lost in individual whims and shallow popularity, has started to resurface on the fiery court.

Remember the never-say-die spirit which the old bunch of Ginebra campaigners like Dante Gonzalgo, Rudy Distrito, Bobby Jaworski, Chito Loyzaga have laid a patent on?

That old drive is back. And the new, young Ginebra squad, not given much of a chance to shine at the start of the All-Filipino conference, appears ready and raring to reclaim the copyright to that tested winning style.

There's no telling if it would stick, this newfound fire that had fueled the legendary campaigns of the PBA's most popular team in the past.

Yes, there was a time when fans would skip work, run and fight their way inside the stadium whenever Ginebra had a scheduled match.

* * *

Of course, the fans have not yet returned in full force. But if coach Allan Caidic succeeds in sustaining heart and momentum, bingo, the PBA could again suffer from that old, happy affliction called overpopulation.

Now hold it, please. While Ginebra might be on its way to luring back team loyalists in droves, this unfortunately did not seem to be the case with sister team San Miguel Beer.

That suspicious setback suffered by the Beermen in Pampanga last week had experts and plain fans shrieking in disgust.

Nothing wrong with losing, even the best teams could have an off day. However, there was this strong belief that the Beermen did not play honestly or hard enough in Pampanga against Mobiline.

San Miguel finished with only 68 points in a smelly losing effort.

"How come the best shooting team in the league with a 90 average per game in its last four outings suddenly could not shoot?"

That question was raised by Mike T. Pangilinan, an outspoken basketball scholar who has decided to settle down in Taytay, Rizal.

That setup, continued Mr. Pangilinan, was perfect for the Binondo gambling syndicate. *Limas ang llamadista, tiyak nagmumura ang mga nagbigay ng* plus 10.

It cannot be a case of off-night or *malas,* he insisted, the excuse is not acceptable. The cheap kind of game that San Miguel dished out could destroy the credibility of the league. It was unfair to SMB fans and PBA followers who had expected a decent win for SMB.

Mobiline, which won by 12 points, had no business celebrating, Mr. Pangilinan said, because it was a clear giveaway.

Just the same, he continued, Mobiline should henceforth strive to be more consistent, play intelligently in order to be truly competitive.

* * *

Still on the PBA, reader Joshua Suignab of Alvarado, Lanao del Norte, says the astronomical salaries of PBA superstars should never be a cause for celebration.

"I'm shocked," he said, "because simple arithmetic shows that something must be wrong in Vienna."

He continued: "It is hard to believe that a company would spend millions for one player merely for the honor of winning games. This ugly setup leads us to suspect that somewhere, somehow, games could next be manipulated with the cooperation of these overpaid superstars."

Then he sounded the alarm: "It's sad to conceive that the PBA would soon end up where it should not be. Competing companies could lay fantastic sums on the line and these millionaires could pull some tricks to maintain their position and keep receiving the graces. We would next be treated to negotiated games."

All told, he concluded, teams, players, the pro league itself, must go back to their senses.

Let's hope and pray Ginebra would succeed in again leading the way.

Geriatric care center opens

THE P. Ilusorio Center for Geriatric Care in Antipolo City was recently inaugurated with prominent personalities led by Ilusorio family matriarch Erlinda Kalaw-Ilusorio and family members present.

Established by the PI-EKI Foundation in cooperation with Sukob Inc. to provide quality health care to the sick and to senior citizens, particularly the poor, the newly opened center is located at Crestview Heights, Circumferential Road in Barangay San Roque.

Retiree, 69, robbed, stabbed to death

ROBBERS repeatedly stabbed and battered to death a retired bank employee then fled with P100,000 of his money in Quezon City.

Moises E. Reyes, 69, of Silver Street, Rockwell Subdivision, San Bartolome, Novaliches, Quezon City, was alone inside his house when the unidentified suspects struck between 1 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. Saturday, said PO2 Joseph Dino.

The robbers broke into the victim's house, beat him up with a lead pipe, then stabbed him repeatedly with a kitchen knife, Dino said. The suspects then ransacked the house, found aboout P100,000 in cash and escaped, Dino said.

A tenant of the victim found Reyes at the back of the house lying in a pool of his own blood, but still gasping for breath, police said. He died while undergoing surgery at the Quezon City General Hospital. ***Philip C. Tubeza***

We didn't abandon PICC . . .

(From page A23)

scene right away.

"If a fireman abandons a fire operation, he is automatically taken out of the service and denied his benefits," Estrada said. "If you do that, that is a criminal offense. For a fireman, that is worse than going on AWOL."

Estrada said fire fighters from Pasay and Manila stayed on the whole time the PICC was ablaze.

He also blasted Pimentel for not verifying the trips of fire trucks since fire stations have "running cards" for each fire truck.

"(Pimentel) should ask the right questions if he wants the right answers," Estrada said. "I always thought nut cases in the legislature were the exception rather than the rule. Now I am having second thoughts."

To cite an example, Estrada said Pimentel should be asking why the PICC's automatic fire alarm and sprinkler system did not work, "when it is supposed to be a world-class venue."

Estrada said that when the emergency systems failed, the PICC became "in fact, a fire trap."

He pointed out that firemen lacked even the basic fire fighting equipment. He said the standard issue to fire stations was three or four 50-foot hoses and these would not even reach the fourth floor of the PICC.

Aside from that, fire fighters lacked breathing equipment, Estrada said.

He added Pimentel should also ask why in the General Appropriations Act of 2000, the Bureau of Fire Protection was given P173,715,000 in capital outlay for office supplies but only P32,003,000 for fire fighting equipment.

"Why is the budget for office supplies bigger than for the equipment?" Estrada asked. "Is the BFP an administrative office that gives permits or certificates?

"The BFP fights fire. There isn't much paperwork involved in that compared to other government offices like the BIR or census."

He dismissed the statements of Pimentel and other senators as "all hot air and publicity."

"It is clearly political grandstanding in the season of elections," he said. "Even if they aren't candidates, they are talking about the fire to boost their political stock."

He added senators and legislators should turn their attention to other fires with more casualties.

"The San Andres, Manila fire this month where 3,000 families lost their homes did not get this much attention," Estrada said. "They (senators) are only talking about this because it was their offices that were burned. What about the San Andres, the Ozone disco, Lung Center, Damas de Filipinas fires? No one has taken any significant action to address these fires."

Pinoy American...

(From page A23)

Police said Baker and Ryan at first made an initial $300 deposit under W.W. Holdings on Feb. 20. On the same day, they withdrew $40,000 intended for World Wide Holdings.

The following morning, the two men went to the bank twice and allegedly withdrew $16,000, police said. They returned in the afternoon and tried to get another $9,000 from the W.W. Holdings account.

But by then bank officials were on to them, said Chief Insp. Anthony Rodolfo, head of the CPD intelligence unit.

"We got a call from Mr. Romeo Soriano, the bank manager, who became suspicious about the suspects' withdrawals on Feb. 20 and 21," Rodolfo said.

Soriano told police that they learned that Baker and Ryan did not represent the real W.W. Holdings.

When Baker and Ryan returned around 1:30 p.m. to withdraw the $9,000, they walked straight into the arms of police, Rodolfo said.

The two suspects are now detained in Camp Karingal.

Charges of falsification of commercial documents were filed against them, Rodolfo said.

The Quezon City Prosecutor's Office has ordered the police to find out how the two men learned of the account and to inform Chase Manhattan of the alleged irregularity.

Talent scout murdered over lover's things

BY PHILIP C. TUBEZA

A GAY talent scout was brutally murdered in Quezon City after he refused to part with the belongings of his former boyfriend.

Rogelio "Nonoy" Sumangguit, 34, of San Roque II, Barangay Pag-Asa, Quezon City, was shot with a *sumpak* (homemade shotgun) and then stabbed five times by two unidentified men who tried to get the belongings of Sumangguit's former lover, said investigator SPO1 Efren Sobrepena.

Sumangguit and the suspects apparently had an argument after the talent scout refused to give them the belongings of his alleged lover, identified only as Jay.

Jay left Sumangguit on Saturday, Sobrepena said.

At about noon Monday, the two unidentified men, who were said to be in their 20s, went to Sumangguit's house and asked him to surrender Jay's valuables to them.

But Sumangguit refused and a heated argument erupted between them.

When the suspects noticed that Sumangguit would not give in, they relented, Sobrepena said.

The tension between them subsided and Sumangguit even accompanied the two men on their way out of the squatter neighborhood, Sobrepena said.

Neighbors of the talent scout later heard a shot. The two men had shot Sumangguit with the *sumpak* in the left side of the body, police said.

" A *sumpak* could be small," Sobrepena said. "The gunman must have hidden it in his waist."

But shooting Sumangguit was not enough for the suspects. They also stabbed him five times in different parts of the body, Sobrepena added.

He said the victim died on the spot at 12:10 p.m. The two killers fled.

Police are trying to look for witnesses while other Central Police District agents are looking for Jay, Sobrepena added.

Drunken troublemaker shot dead by neighbor

BUTCHER Reynaldo Llandea was drunk Sunday when he challenged his neighbor to a knife duel. His neighbor shot him in the back.

Llandea, 43, of Alcantara Compound, Apo, Banlat, Tandang Sora, Quezon City, was shot dead by David Ramos, of M. Aquino Street, also in Barangay Banlat, on Sunday afternoon, said investigator SPO1 Ramon Fernandez.

Llandea allegedly wanted Ramos to pay an old debt but Llandea was too rowdy to speak clearly.

Fernandez said Llandea was already armed with a butcher's knife when he went to Ramos' house around 2 p.m. Sunday.

When Llandea arrived, he called out for Ramos to come out of the house and face him. Llandea was then already inside Ramos' garage, police said.

But Ramos did not go out and instead took his caliber .45 pistol and, from inside the house, he fired a single shot, Fernandez said.

Llandea fell after the bullet hit him in the back, he added.

Fernandez said the Scene of the Crime Operations (Soco) team found a bullet hole on the door of Ramos' house. Team members also found the butcher's knife, broken in three pieces, in the garage.

Llandea was brought to the East Avenue Medical Center where he was declared dead on arrival around 3:30 p.m. His body was later brought to the PNP Crime Laboratory for an autopsy, Fernandez said.

He said Central Police District agents are hunting down Ramos.

Philip C. Tubeza

Abalos: I'm not judging Ipe's personal affairs

MANDALUYONG City Mayor Benhur Abalos yesterday stressed he was not passing judgment on the personal life of vice mayor-wannabe Phillip Salvador, who has children with different women.

"Salvador's personal affairs are an issue between him and his family," Abalos said. "I am not to judge him on that."

The mayor would rather talk about the actor's lack of capacity to rule. He said this in reaction to an earlier report, which quoted him comparing the movie star Salvador to disgraced President Joseph Estrada, whose extra-marital affairs were said to have affected his governance.

"I just want to talk about relevant issues here, like his quality of leadership and his capacity to serve the people of Mandaluyong," Abalos said.

He questioned Salvador's knowledge of public administration, particularly of parliamentary procedure, and said "being a public official is no simple thing. It is also a matter of knowing what laws to pass and how to pass them."

Told of Abalos' comment, Salvador yesterday said: "Why, because I'm not a lawyer?"

Abalos also appealed to the Mandaluyong electorate not to be swayed by candidates who make themselves visible in birthday parties and wakes. Salvador is said to have been doing the rounds of both.

"This election is not only a matter of me winning alone but of my whole team, from congressman to councilors," Abalos said.

Agnes Donato

Dong wants more credit facilities for vendors, other low-income groups

PUNO

STRESSING the urgent need to bring the poor to the economic mainstream, former Press Secretary and Presidential Spokesman Ricardo "Dong" Puno Jr. on Sunday urged the government to open more credit facilities and micro-financing programs for vendors and other small entrepreneurs.

Puno issued the call following his visits to the Cloverleaf or Balintawak Market and the Muñoz Market, both in Quezon City, where he found out that the common complaints of vendors and other small entrepreneurs are the exorbitant interest rates charged by informal lenders and the lack of credit alternatives for small borrowers like them.

This was also the complaint of vendors whom he met and talked to during Laban's tours of the Quinta, Central and Divisoria markets in Manila.

Puno, one of Laban's senatorial frontrunners, said opening more credit windows for the poor would not only ease the plight of small borrowers but would also encourage other members of the country's marginalized sectors to venture into small businesses and home-based enterprises.

"Our market vendors and other small businessmen are also important elements of our economy, that's why the government should also focus its attention on them," Puno said.

He noted that due to the lack of credit facilities, market vendors often resort to borrowing from informal lenders, who charge 20 percent interest for small loans ranging from P5,OOO to P10,000.

For instance, he said, a vendor who borrows P10,000 usually has to settle the debt by paying P200 a day for two months to these informal lenders, which means a total payment of P12,000, or a markup of P2,000.

Puno said that another way that the government can help small borrowers is through the implementation of more micro-financing programs.

Micro-financing, which offers easy-to-pay, low-interest credit to small entrepreneurs, will help create more jobs and provide poor families with alternative means of livelihood, he noted.

Puno, who is campaigning under the slogan "Puno ng Pag-asa para sa Masa," has an eight-point program aimed at uplifting the lives of the poor through concrete, doable programs. This program focuses on education and jobs, food security, good government and justice, environmental protection, peace process, housing, press freedom, and a stronger campaign against illegal drugs.

Sanchez, 59

FELY "Nene" Sanchez of San Pedro, Laguna will be laid to rest on March 3.

Sanchez passed away on Feb. 23. She was 59. She is survived by her sisters Mrs. Helen Leano and Dolores Sanchez.

She will be buried at the Eternal Gardens in Biñan, Laguna after the 8 a.m. Mass at the San Pedro parish.

9 WPD officers ordered arrested for killing of 2 contract workers

BY JEROME ANING

THE HEAD of the Western Police District yesterday ordered the arrest of nine policemen accused of summarily executing two Muslim overseas contract workers whom they claimed were Moro Islamic Liberation Front members, in Quiapo, Manila eight months ago.

Chief Supt. Avelino Razon said he received yesterday afternoon copies of the arrest warrants issued on Monday by Judge Rodolfo Ponferrada of the Manila regional trail court Branch 41.

Facing double murder charges are SPO4 Wilson Tibor, SPO4 Remigio Estacio, SPO4 Julian Siriban, SPO3 Edgardo Abaga, SPO2 Eduardo Ramos, PO3 Randy Dimayuga, PO3 Ronald Hernandez, PO2 Philip Malindog and PO1 Ignacio Garian.

The judge dismissed charges against the 10th suspect, SPO4 Benedicto Rodriguez, who claimed he merely tipped Tibor's team of the victims' location.

Razon said he has turned over the warrants to Supt. Jonathan Miano, head of the district's intelligence and investigation unit.

Razon tasked Miano to round up the suspects and bring them to court as soon as possible.

The WPD chief also denied the suspects are in hiding, and said he hopes the nine will give up peacefully.

After the incident, the suspects were transferred from the WPD-District Police Intelligence Unit (DPIU) to the District Headquarters Support Unit (DHSU).

Sources said several of the suspects who were at the DHSU office yesterday were told to stay put at the WPD headquarters and contact their families and lawyers.

Tibor and company are accused of killing Esmael Omar and Akmad Samin during an alleged shootout on Globo de Oro Street in Quiapo, Manila on June 8, 2000.

The slayings outraged the country's Muslim community after witnesses claimed the victims were shot in cold blood.

But the lawmen said the duo were armed with a .38-caliber pistol and a grenade and tried to fight back.

Later, the victims' families came out and said Akmad and Omar were mere OCWs preparing their travel papers for their next trip abroad.

Suspicion also fell on the policemen when they took the victims to a distant hospital.

Tibor, then DPIU operations chief, claimed Omar was an MILF commander who came to Manila to lead a demolition team that would create a diversion for government troops then fighting Muslim rebels in Mindanao.

Akmad was reportedly Omar's right-hand man and bodyguard.

Tibor is the current president of the Manila's Finest Brotherhood Association, an organization of noncommissioned officers at the WPD.

Ponferrada will determine if the policemen could be granted bail when the prosecution presents evidence against them.

Prosecutors from the Department of Justice earlier recommended no bail for the suspects, saying the killings were a heinous crime punishable by death.

2 policemen face homicide, coddling raps

BY AGNES E .DONATO

TWO MANDALUYONG policemen are facing criminal and administrative charges, one for allegedly shooting dead a suspected snatcher armed with a defective gun, and the other, for reportedly intervening in the arrest of vendors selling pornographic materials on Edsa.

If PO2 Raul Telan failed to justify his act, he may be charged with homicide for gunning down Joseph Ian Lagazon, 24, of Angeles, Pampanga on Monday, police said.

But Telan, a member of the Eastern Police District Traffic Enforcement Group, claimed he merely responded to the distress call of security guard Salvador Reyes, whose gun was taken by Lagazon, a suspected snatcher.

According to police records, Reyes was manning his post at the Chowking branch in Starmall at about 8:30 p.m. on Monday when Lagazon allegedly snatched his service firearm.

Lagazon fled and rode a Rhine passenger bus on Edsa bound for Makati City, records showed.

While chasing Lagazon, Reyes shouted for help, calling the attention of PO2 Telan, who was then with members of the Wack-Wack Bantay Bayan conducting traffic at the corner of Edsa and Shaw Boulevard.

Cornered, Lagazon reportedly refused to surrender and instead aimed Reyes' gun at Telan.

Lagazon allegedly squeezed the trigger but the gun failed to fire.

Telan allegedly saw the gun misfire, but the lawman still shot Lagazon.

Lagazon was taken to the Medical City where he died.

Yesterday, SPO1 Joselito del Rosario of the Mandaluyong foot patrol, was charged before the local prosecutor's office for interfering in the arrest of peddlers of pornography.

Insp. Efren Jugo, chief of the Mandaluyong Criminal Investigation Detection Group, said that a local anti-vice unit was conducting a raid at Edsa Central at about 6:30 p.m. Monday when SPO1 del Rosario suddenly appeared and asked the other lawmen to stop what they were doing.

By then, members of the anti-vice unit had arrested several vendors and confiscated pornographic magazines and VCDs on sale, Jugo said.

The vice squad was about to haul the suspects to police headquarters when Del Rosario allegedly pulled out his gun and threatened to shoot them, Jugo said. The vendors seized this opportunity and fled along with their pornographic wares.

Police wound up with only four VCDs. "Del Rosario should be charged for this," Jugo said. "Apparently, he has been coddling these illegal vendors."

Sick man plunges to death

A MAN said to be suffering from schizophrenia died after allegedly leaping from the top of the Ospital ng Sampaloc in Manila on Monday.

Richard Ponce, 26, single and a resident of Dos Castillas Street, Sampaloc, reportedly suffered a seizure and threatened to stab himself, said Chief Insp. Juanito Taluban, head of the Western Police District homicide section.

Taluban said Ponce's family brought him to the hospital so he could be calmed. Doctors put Ponce under sedation.

About 1:30 p.m., however, Ponce woke up and was able to free himself when nobody was looking. He ran to the top of the three-story hospital and jumped, Taluban said.

Ponce landed on the concrete ledge above the hospital's front entrance and died on the spot. *Jerome Aning*

170 dzRH employees go 'off the air'; more to be fired

BY ALCUIN PAPA

TODAY is the last day of work for some 170 employees of the top-rated nationwide radio network dzRH, the country's oldest radio station.

The employees were terminated last month and there is already talk that more would loose their jobs in the coming months.

Last month, management of dzRH served the notices of termination to the employees. It cited as reason for letting them go the economic crisis.

These employees were from the news desk, rank and file, administrative offices and even the station's institutional drama department.

But lawyer Hadrian Arroyo, the only person management authorized to speak to media about the terminations, earlier said only about 12 were terminated and that the company was letting them go because they were "non-performing assets."

Employees disputed Arroyo's statement and said it was a well-known fact that the station is firing more than 12 employees.

They also said that being "non-performing assets" was not the reason given to them by management nor was it stated in their notices of termination.

An employee of the radio station, who requested anonymity, told the INQUIRER that the mood inside the dzRH newsroom has been "somber" of late.

"The morale here is very low and it's obvious that people are not happy," the employee said. "We used to be so happy here. Now everyone just wants to go home after work."

Other employees told the INQUIRER that management is planning a "second wave" of terminations right after the May elections.

"No one working here has any peace of mind," one of them said.

The INQUIRER could not confirm how many more employees would be terminated but a "magic list," as the employees have called it, of those who are next to be axed has already been prepared by management.

"Their plan is to use the employees for the coming election coverage then terminate us anyway," one employee said. "They would use us and throw us away like rags."

Early yesterday afternoon, Arroyo's secretary said the management spokesperson was in a meeting. On the next call, the secretary said he had already left.

The secretary refused to give Arroyo's cell phone number.

'Terror cop' runs in Malabon

BY CHRISTIAN V. ESGUERRA

A "TERROR" policeman who gained prominence for playing Dirty Harry against notorious criminals will run for councilor in Malabon.

Retired Col. Alfonso "Boyong" Mañalac, whose life story was made into a 1991 movie starring Eddie Garcia, is gunning for a seat in the municipal council under the Nationalist People's Coalition ticket of reelectionist Mayor Amado Vicencio.

A Malabon police chief during the late 1980s, Mañalac said Vicencio's camp invited him to run for councilor to help improve the town's peace and order situation.

"I was primarily tapped to apply my police training," Mañalac said. "I'll devote my time to ensuring the safety of my constituents."

His decision to run was also triggered by the tragic fate of his 21-year-old son Marlon who was murdered by five Caloocan policemen in 1989 because of a minor traffic altercation.

The son, then a barangay councilman and a graduating civil engineering student, was shot dead by the policemen, whom he had accidentally sideswiped in Caloocan, Mañalac said.

During their argument, the policemen beat up the young Mañalac, he added.

When they realized that the young man was a son of Mañalac, who was then a police major and member of the NPD inspectorate division, they decided to kill the young man to prevent him from filing charges, Mañalac said.

"If I win, I'll make sure Malabon's youth will not suffer the fate of my son," he said. "It's very hard for a parent to endure such a tragedy."

During the 1998 local elections, Mañalac ran for mayor under the Liberal Party, whose presidential candidate was Alfredo Lim, his Dirty Harry counterpart in the Manila police.

Armida vs Teddy Boy in Makati

BY GERALD G. LACUARTA

REYNA

FILM producer Armida Siguion-Reyna yesterday filed with the Commission on Elections her certificate of candidacy for congresswoman in the first district of Makati, challenging Today publisher Teodoro "Teddy Boy" Locsin Jr. who declared his bid a day before.

Siguion-Reyna, immediate past chair of the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board, filed her certificate of candidacy with the Comelec National Capital Region office. She is running under the Partido ng Masang Pilipino, the party of ousted President Joseph Estrada.

"I had the chance to do public service while I was chair of the MTRCB and this is just continuing that kind of service, only beyond the movie and television industry," she said.

Siguion-Reyna, younger sister of reelectionist Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile who is running under the Estrada coalition Pwersa ng Masa, said she would push legislation that would "enhance the existing programs of Makati especially the education and health programs which are the hallmarks of the Binay administration."

Former Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, husband of incumbent Makati Mayor Elenita Binay, supports Locsin, they being partymates in the PDP-Laban. Locsin filed his certificate of candidacy on Monday.

Siguion-Reyna said she and Locsin were "friends."

"We both want to serve," Siguion-Reyna said. "We have the purest of intentions so I don't think there should be any problem."

Locsin and Binay yesterday accompanied reelectionist Makati Rep. Agapito "Butch" Aquino in filing his own certificate of candidacy for congressman of the second district of Makati.

Locsin said he was not aware that Siguion-Reyna had also decided to run.

"I just saw Armida upstairs (at the Comelec NCR office) but I don't know if she's filing or what," Locsin said.

"I thought she was still with the MTRCB because she said she was not resigning until Mr. Estrada is declared not the President any more, so at this time I don't have any opponent," he added.

Informed by reporters that Siguion-Reyna was filing her candidacy to challenge him, and asked if he considered the feisty film producer his "strongest" opponent, Locsin said: "No, not at all."

"Based on the surveys (my chances are) very good and with the support of Chair Binay, almost indubitable," he said.

Being media and television personalities, Siguion-Reyna and Locsin must take a leave of absence from their media work as required by election laws.

JV bent on getting elected despite pa's downfall

BY AGNES E. DONATO

JOSE Victor "JV" Ejercito, son of deposed President Estrada by Guia Gomez, yesterday formally joined the mayoral race, claiming that there was still a strong clamor for him to run despite the downfall of his father in politics.

All wearing orange shirts, JV and his partymates from the Partido ng Masang Pilipino were accompanied by some 500 supporters as they filed the certificates of candidacy before the local Commission on Elections.

Only a day before, reelectionist Rep. Jose Mari Gonzalez led candidates of United Opposition of San Juan in formalizing the party's candidacy.

But Ejercito, who would be running side by side with incumbent San Juan Councilor Leonardo Celles, seemed unfazed by criticisms and maintained that the people of San Juan continue to be followers of the Estrada/Ejercito family.

Describing his father's ouster as a "traumatic experience," Ejercito admitted that he had second thoughts about running. But he claimed that the strong support of the people of San Juan for him prompted him to pursue his political plans.

"I don't want to sound so confident," he said. "But despite what happened to my father, there is still a strong clamor for me to run."

He denied allegations that his family, which had been running the town for the past 30 years, has been building a political dynasty in San Juan.

He instead hit his opponents for brandishing an old style of politics: "We are now in the computer age and what we need is new politics. We need a change in politicians."

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8	DOLBY SURROUND	TUHOG
9	DOLBY SURROUND	HOSTAGE
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9	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	WOMAN ON TOP
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"INDEPENDENT Women," the concert of two first-rate divas, Regine Velasquez and Jaya on Feb. 10, drew an overwhelming response which prompted Maxi-Media to extend the show on Feb. 14, Valentine's Day.

That seemed not enough, though for many are still clamoring for another night of this much-talked about musical event.

That's why on March 17, Saturday, 8 pm, Maxi-Media brings back "Independent Women" in a much bigger venue, the Tanghalang Francisco Balagtas (Folk Arts Theater).

"Independent Women: The Repeat" is set to be another powerful fusion of the distinct yet complementing singing voices and styles of Regine and Jaya. Aside from the memorable solo renditions and duets which they did during their two-night stint, other surprise numbers are in store to complete the musical treat.

The concert is under the musical direction of Marc Lopez. It also features The Opera on back-up vocals and will be staged by Maxi-Media's resident director, Rico Mortel.

Tickets at P1,200, P800, P600, P400, P200 and P100 are now available at all Ticketworld outlets (891-5610) in major National Bookstore, Tower Records, and Robinson's Department Store branches and at Maxi-Media (813-8999/ 893-7737).

The show is another production of Maxi-Media International, with Sunsilk Nutrient Shampoo and Farlin Baby Care Products.

G Toengi in 'Larawan'

FOR the third installment of her four-episode drama engagement, G Toengi faces one of the most heart-wrenching dilemmas a woman could ever have on "G sa Larawan."

Growing up not appreciated and always competing for her parents' attention, her life drastically changes as her dear friend Owen (Gardo Versoza) suddenly becomes homeless and moves into her pad.

Much to G's surprise, her parents are delighted with the idea. Soon, the two find themselves getting married, again to her parents' sheer pleasure.

All seems fine except for a minor detail G and Owen fail to mention to their parents that Owen is gay.

"Bahay-Bahayan" on "G sa Larawan" airs 9 tonight, right after "Beh Bote Nga" on GMA-7.

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ODEON	HANNIBAL
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ROBEN	HOSTAGE
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TANDEM-2	IKA - 7 GLORYA
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ACT-2	ANAK NG KANO
ACT-3	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
ACT-4	TURN ON
CORONET-2	BLONDIE
QUEZON-1	TUSONG 2 SOME
REMAR	HOSTAGE
REMAR-2	OBJECT OF OBSESSION
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CINEMA-8	SNATCH
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Marrying for money

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

LAST Friday, we were finally able to watch the controversial show, "Who Wants to Marry A Multi-Millionaire" over a UHF channel. After viewing the program, we saw why the show has ticked off so many among the record number of viewers who made it a toprater.

The "bridal search" show started off nicely enough, with the 10 contestants parading in swimsuits or other revealing outfits, just like candidates in a beauty tilt.

Then came the question-and-answer portion, again like in a beauty contest. This time, however, the questions were more personal than those asked in beauty competitions.

A seemingly straightforward query, "Is having children essential to a marriage? Turned out to be a trick question. The prospective bride who got the highest points from the multi-millionaire bachelor's family members was the only one who said that having children wasn't a priority with her.

All the while, the bachelor was occasionally shown on camera, but shot only from behind. This gave him a mysterious aura, as though he were a lofty and powerful pasha for whose all-important nod all these women in his TV harem were vying with all the ardor in their ambitious hearts.

A penultimate portion had the remaining five finalists modeling bridal gowns of their choice. Then they were asked to share their most heartfelt thoughts about married life with the mysterious multi-millionaire of their most materialistic dreams.

Then, finally, the wealthy and much-desired bachelor was finally "unveiled," and he turned out to be a tall, stocky, suave but not very good looking man in his 30s. He knew the right things to say at this potentially embarrassing moment for the four women he would have to reject, if he wanted to continue living in an officially monogamous society.

He started off by piously stating that he felt humbled these women who had dared turn convention and tradition on their heads by actively wooing him, instead of the other way around.

But he said he went into this unconventional search because he couldn't pass up this unique chance to select his mate from such obviously physically outstanding and desirable women.

Then, he strode over to one of the finalists, knelt at her feet, and proposed to her. In so doing, he tried to bring traditional practice back into play. But it was too late.

Viewers couldn't ignore the fact that there was something mutually exploitative and impersonal about the very nature of this "instant wedding" itself.

The bachelor professed to love his instant bride, and when she accepted his proposal, she wept happy tears, but the fact was that, 10 minutes ago, bride and groom hadn't even met, and now they were getting hitched—hopefully, for life!

Unless "love at first sight" does happen, and both this bachelor and the winning bride-to-be were both zapped by cupid's arrow the first time they laid eyes on each other, we have to accept the fact that the wedding that took place just a few minutes after the bachelor had chosen his bride was not a union and good investment in the future.

Some people say that this isn't so reprehensible, because quite a number of marriages "in real life" aren't "love-motivated" the prearranged marriage, the marriage of convenience, women getting wed to rich men to improve their lot in life, men looking for trophy wives, etc.

But to have those mutually exploitative unions formally enshrined on TV as a game show is carrying things too far. Who wants to marry a multi-millionaire? We hope that more and more women out there will say, "I do—but not this way!"

CESAR Montano (center) with "Hostage" co-stars Kristine Hermosa and Bayani Agbayani.

Cesar back in new movie

BIGNESS has become associated with Cesar Montano, especially after his two blockbusters, "Rizal" and "Muro Ami." Cesar can't do anything less.

Gone from the big screen for more that a year, Cesar is back in another big movie, Star Cinema's "Hostage," which tackles a very timely subject—kidnappings and dirty politicians.

Cesar has done a number of movies for Star Cinema, including the hit action-dramas "Utol" and "Asero."

Also starring in "Hostage," directed by Augusto Salvador, are Kristine Hermosa as Cesar's love interest, Bayani Agbayani as Cesar's friend (and Kristine's brother), Maureen Guese as the "hostaged" girl, Roi Vinson as the drug lord, Daniel Fernando as Cesar's congressman-cousin, Amy Austria and Rommel Montano (Cesar's real-life brother).

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THE FAMILY MAN - P 13 11:40, 2:15, 4:50, 7:25, 10:00	CAST AWAY - P 13 1:30, 4:20, 7:10, 10:00	HANNIBAL - R 18 11:15, 2:00, 4:45, 7:30, 10:15

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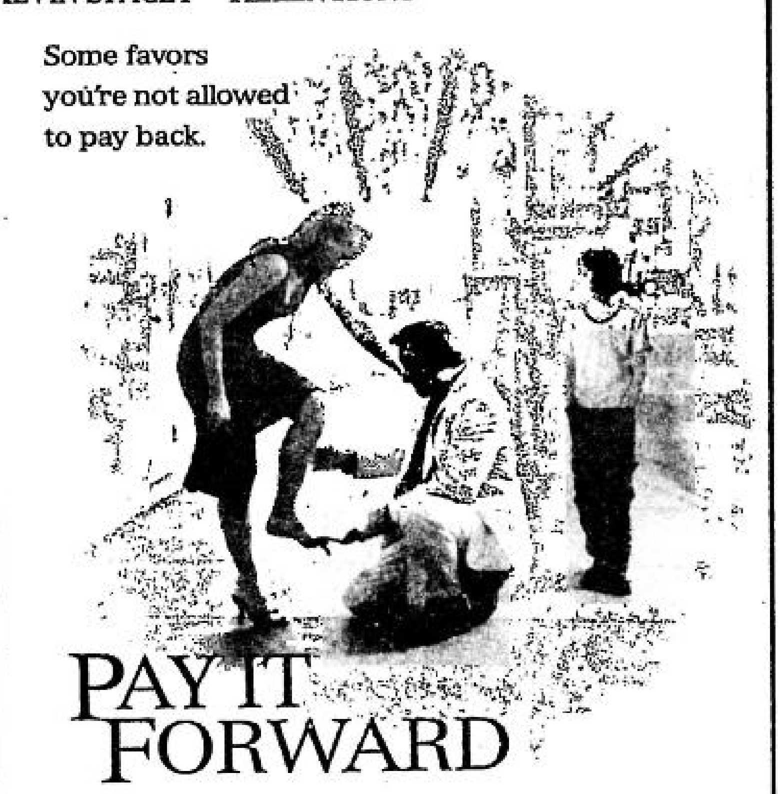

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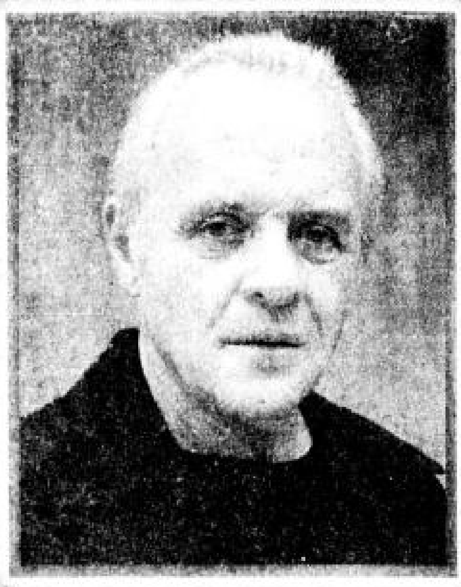

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- Eleganteng manamit
- WANTED ng FBI
- Isa lamang ang nagpatibok sa puso niya

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Tigerland marked director Joel Schumacher's welcomed return after the blockbusters like Batman & Robin, 8 mm, & Flawless. Tigerland also marked the deserving arrival of Irish actor Colin Farrell as Hollywood's hottest new discovery.
The film features a group of recruits that went through Advanced Infantry Training at Fort Polk, Louisiana's infamous Tigerland, the last stop before Vietnam for tens of thousands of young men in 1971.
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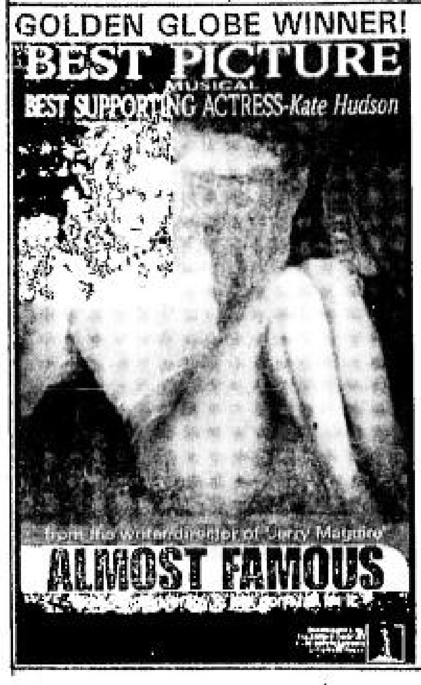


ALMOST FAMOUS
Must-see film on sex & rock 'n roll
'Almost Famous' opens Mar 7
In the tradition of Cameron Crowe's Oscar-nominated JERRY MAGUIRE, ALMOST FAMOUS is a coming-of-age tale that is intelligent, well-written and infused with humor in unlikely places.
Inspired by the real-life experiences of the Academy Award nominee writer/director, ALMOST FAMOUS is the story of an unabashed rock 'n roll music fan tasked to write for Rolling Stone magazine in the '70s at age 15. As he joins the band Stillwater on tour, he befriends the band members and their groupies, and grows up, losing his virginity along the way.
ALMOST FAMOUS won a Golden Globe BEST PICTURE Award (Musical/Comedy), and 4 Academy Award nominations for Original Screenplay, Editing, and Supporting Actress for Kate Hudson and Frances McDormand. The movie also stars Billy Crudup, Jason Lee, Patrick Fugit, Anna Paquin and Fairuza Balk.
Embraced by critics, ALMOST FAMOUS is described as "absolutely fabulous," "honest and brilliant," "bighearted and bittersweet," and "filled with splendid performances."

ENTERTAINMENT

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

Pinoy actor in 'Cinderella' charms Canadian critics

BY JANET C. GARCIA

TORONTO—Paolo Montalban's charisma and talent charmed the audience here as he portrayed the role of The Prince in the musical play "Cinderella," which ran from Jan. 30 to Feb. 4 at the historic Pantages Theater.

The play, created almost half a century ago originally for television by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein, was not a hit among Canadian theater critics.

But the Manila-born Montalban, who performed with Grammy awardee and seasoned actress Eartha Kitt (as the fairy godmother) and pop singer Deborah Gibson (as Cinderella), saved the day.

A critic from the Globe and Mail, Canada's national newspaper, said all performers failed but Montalban, who debuted as The Prince in the ABC/Disney-produced TV special Cinderella four years ago.

"The most successful is Paolo Montalban as the prince," said Globe and Mail's Ray Conlogue. "His strategy is to act like a well-mannered Yale undergrad who has wandered by accident into the chronic ward of a mental hospital. He sings with a pellucid sincerity that Rodgers and Hammerstein would have admired."

Toronto Star's Richard Ouzounian believed that the play almost lost its fairy tale charm and timeless beauty because of its ultramodern components, from the neon-colored costumes of the villains (the stepmother and stepsisters) to Gibson's style of singing, which still clings to pop.

But Ouzounian was impressed by Montalban. "On the positive side, I enjoyed the performance of Paolo Montalban as the Prince, although his sincerity seemed to have wandered in from another far more appropriate production," he wrote.

The National Post's Robert Cushman simply thought that Montalban, 27, "was pleasant enough" to be The Prince.

Role of a lifetime

Tall, dark and handsome Montalban debunked the notion that The Prince was Caucasian when he appeared with Brandy (as Cinderella), Whitney Houston (as fairy godmother) and Whoopi Goldberg (as the Queen) in the TV version of "Cinderella" in 1997.

The psychology graduate, who has been on stage for almost 10 years now, said he feels more comfortable acting as The Prince.

"I love it," Montalban said. "It's the role of the lifetime."

On stage, he had been part of productions such as "King and I" (on Broadway), "Man of La Mancha," "Ballad of Little Jo," "Nine" and the "Flower Drum Song."

After "Cinderella," which will be presented in 20 more North American cities, Montalban said he would try out again for the role of an American-born Chinese circa 1959 in "Flower Drum Song" for its Los Angeles, San Francisco and New York City productions.

Beautiful people

He also finished a Laurice Guillen film called "Magic Adobo," which tackles the lives of four Pinoys in New York. "It's an ensemble kind of movie, a comic relief just like 'Soul Food' and 'The Big Chill,'" he said.

On TV, Montalban was also seen as Kung Lao in the WB series "Mortal Conquest," where he showed his martial arts prowess.

Although he has been fortunate to depict different characters, the 6'1" actor craves to play Dr. Jose Rizal on stage.

Montalban was named one of the 50 Most Beautiful People in 1998 but he said he's got flaws too.

"One of my eyes is lower than the other. I also have a really big head. It's huge. And I have broad shoulders. But I disappear when I turn sideways." Montalban, who plays six musical instruments and whose parents Paul and Vivian are chemists, grew up in New Jersey.

Being proud

He said being a Filipino is an asset in his acting career.

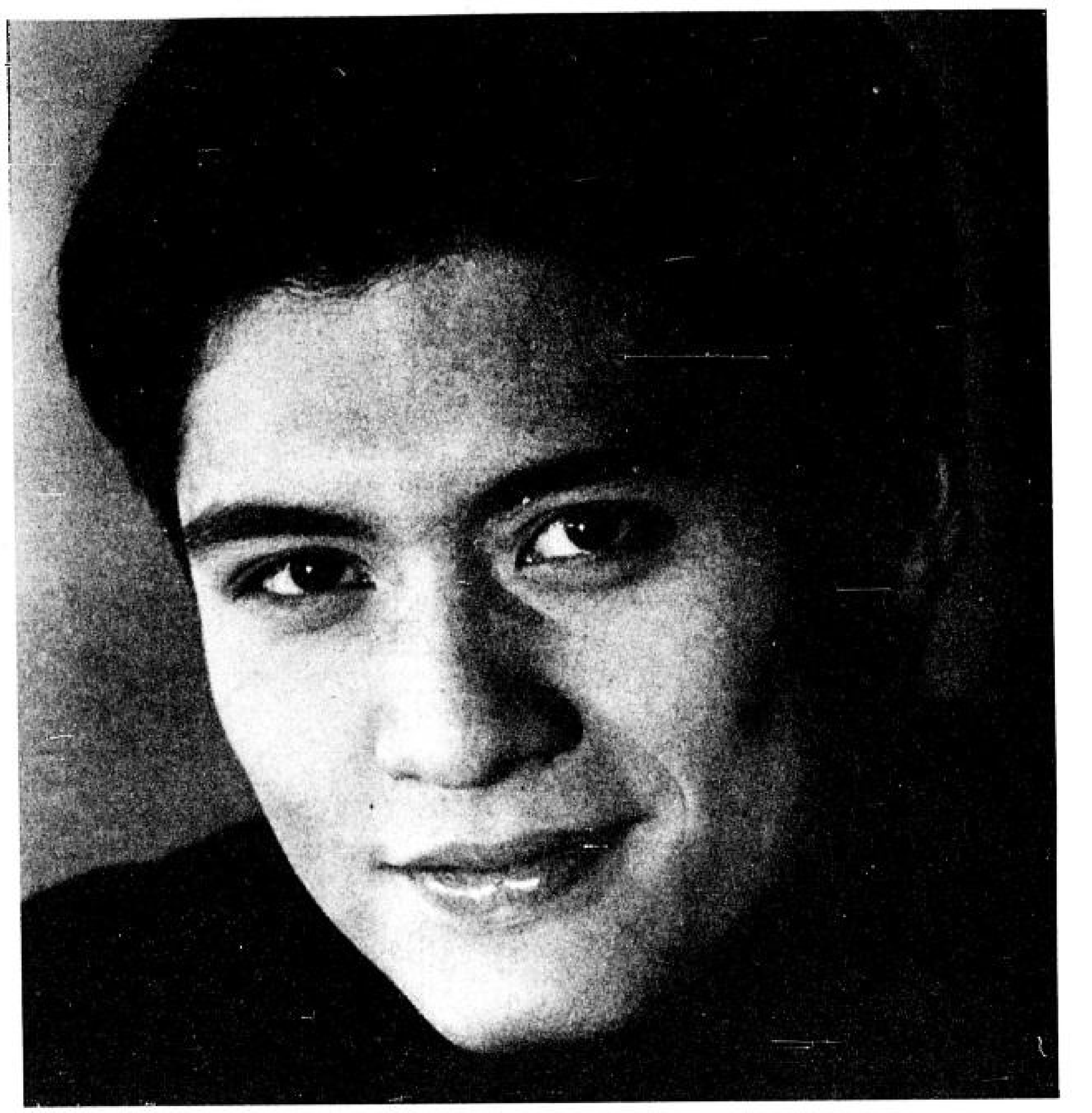
"Filipinos should not think that they would not be hired because of race," he said. "That's a wrong attitude. We should be proud of who we are."

In 1999, he went to Manila and was amazed by Filipino talents. "They sing and dance well."

To be in his place, he said, they should remember two things: "Patience and hard work."

"This whole business is about luck so it's better to be prepared when opportunities come by," he said.

He said he would be willing to help Filipinos make it big in the field of acting. And, like the good characters in "Cinderella," he would like to see them live happily ever after.



PROUD TO BE PINOY. Paolo Montalban says Filipinos should be proud of who they are.

Caparas' choice: show biz over politics

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Leah Salterio

SHOW BIZ prevailed over politics, as far as director **Carlo Caparas** is concerned. While a number of show biz stars formally announced their respective candidacy for the coming elections, Caparas has opted to shy away from politics.

The noted director of many box office hits was being wooed to run for Rizal governor or Pasig mayor. But Caparas feels he is not yet ready to toss his hat into the political ring.

By 2004, he will probably give politics a try, says a source close to the director. But Caparas has turned down the recent offers for him to join politics.

That's certainly welcome news, especially to show biz insiders who are looking forward to see Caparas back to the director's chair again. It is also good news to Caparas' wife, producer **Donna Villa**, who would rather see her hubby directing movies for their own outfit, Golden Lions Films.

For the past two years, Caparas has chosen to concentrate on TV directing, as he works at the helm of the daily series, "Pangarap Kong Jackpot," produced by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) to boost the lotto sales. The series airs on ABC 5.

For his return to filmmaking, Caparas is now working on a material for a movie on Edsa Dos. More than the casting of key characters in the historic uprising which caused the downfall of the Estrada administration, Caparas is now seriously contemplating about the storyline of the second People Power revolt and how he will present it on the big screen.

The director of true-to-life massacre flicks is now negotiating with important persons to secure the rights for the Edsa Dos movie.

What's new on Studio 23

RECENTLY, I took time out from cable viewing and got glued to a particular program on Studio 23.

"The Others" is about a group of gifted individuals who share an extra-sensory ability to reach beyond this world and into other dimensions.

The program doesn't boast of any stellar cast. In fact, the stars—**Julianne Nicholson** and **Bill Cobbs**—are relatively unknown to me. But the credits that hype the show state that the writers behind such thrillers as "The Net" and "The Game" and the producer-writer team behind many of the acclaimed episodes of "The X-Files," have combined their talents to produce the riveting, one-hour series. Worth checking out, isn't it?

Bette Midler also stars in her self-titled comedy series which closely hews to her life. "Bette" is about a singer-actress battling the clock in both her personal and professional life, after 30 years in the spotlight.

"Grosse Pointe," meanwhile, is a fictitious, yet hilarious primetime soap which takes a behind-the-scene look on the lives of young actors trying to cope with the demands of stardom. It is created by **Darren Star**, the same guy behind widely followed and popular series like "Sex and the City," "Melrose Place" and "Beverly Hills 90210."

Star also treads on to the world of high finance and high stakes living in "The Street," which offers viewers a peak into the charged-up life on Wall Street, one of the world's most powerful financial districts.

Studio 23 has given viewers phenomenally successful series like "Dawson's Creek" and "Charmed." No wonder it has become one of the favorite stations of the youth and the AB market – a fact supported by the Year 2000 Trends Viewership and Lifestyle Study.

This year, the VHF channel of ABS-CBN has apparently acquired a good crop of exciting TV hits, which complement its locally produced shows.

Another supernatural hit is "Angel," from the makers of "Buffy, The Vampire Slayer."

"Jack n Jill" is a light-hearted romantic drama-comedy about life, love and career after college in New York City.

Meanwhile, glitz, power and turbulent family struggle grab centerstage in "Titans," the serial drama from **Aaron Spelling**.

"Gilmore Girls" is a heartwarming program that focuses on the relationship between a free-spirited 32-year-old single mother and her serious-minded 16-year-old daughter.

Of course, there are also the local programs which have gained their respective following.

"Points of View" remains a widely followed weekly show with **Teddy Boy Locsin** (who replaced **Dong Puno Jr.**), **Cher Calvin, Mo Twister** and **Jessica Zafra**.

Daphne Oseña hosts "Guide to Urban Living," which helps young professionals cope with the realities of city living.

Bukidnon Rep. **Miguel Zubiri** turns TV host in the environmental documentary, "Explorer."

Real-life sweethearts **Suzi Entrata** and **Paolo Abrera** provide excitement and zest in "Game Plan."

Studio 23 gives music videos a new spin with "Myx," which offers a broad spectrum of music videos—pop, rock, adult contemporary, urban, dance and world music, among others.

To premiere next month is "E-Co," an entertaining and informative show which aims to raise environmental awareness among the youth. It is hosted by three promising personalities—**Mitzi Borromeo, JM Rodriguez** and Mo Twister.

Feedback

FROM **Dennis Clemente** of Ogilvy.

"You're right. I would die for the role of **Tom Hanks** in 'Castaway.' It's not only worthy of at least an Oscar nomination, he should win it hands down, without a doubt.

"I know **Russell Crowe** was good in 'Gladiator' and he deserves a shot at it, but Tom's role was more challenging and difficult to pull through. Imagine carrying 90 percent of the movie alone. Of course, his physical transformation was something else. But it was really his acting, the kind only a master at his craft can do.

"But the question is, will Tom win this time, considering the popularity of Crowe? However, it is also crucial to point out that Crowe did dump **Meg (Ryan)** for his cattle and that could hurt his chances, aside from him being an Aussie, of course."

CAPARAS. Turned down recent offers for him to join politics

Major changes on 2

PROF. **Randy David** has been making his presence felt on ABS-CBN. Last Sunday, David hosted the TV documentary special, "Letters from a Revolution," which involved series of vignettes that relives the euphoria of Edsa 1 and 2.

On Monday night, David was seen again hosting a segment on "The Correspondents."

The buzz is loud that David will soon join ABS-CBN where he will have his own public affairs program. So it's only understandable that the network has been giving him special assignments to precede his regular show.

Major changes are indeed happening at ABS-CBN, after its news anchors left certain programs to venture into politics.

Korina Sanchez will take over from Noli de Castro as "TV Patrol" anchor. Meanwhile, **Karen Davila** will be seen on the late-evening news program, "Headlines."

Karen's boyfriend, **David Jude Sta. Ana**, recently joined the network as director for news. DJ left his job at the GMA-7 news desk, apparently for a better offer.

"THE OTHERS:" New, riveting one-hour series on Studio 23.

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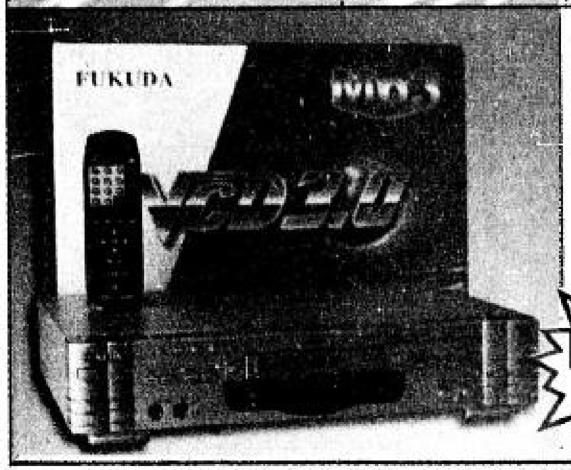

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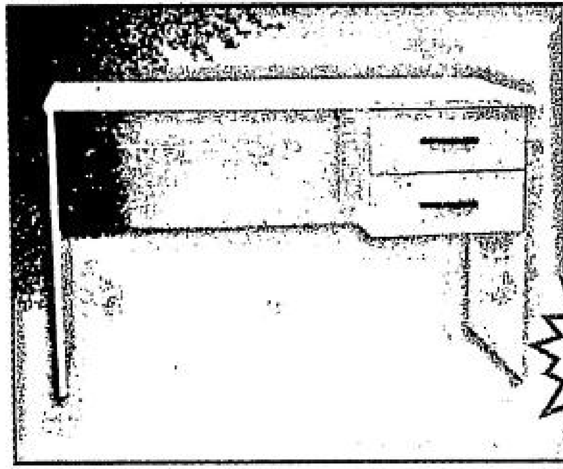

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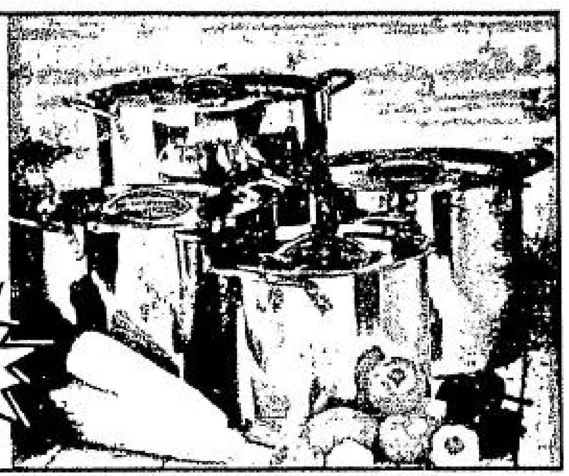

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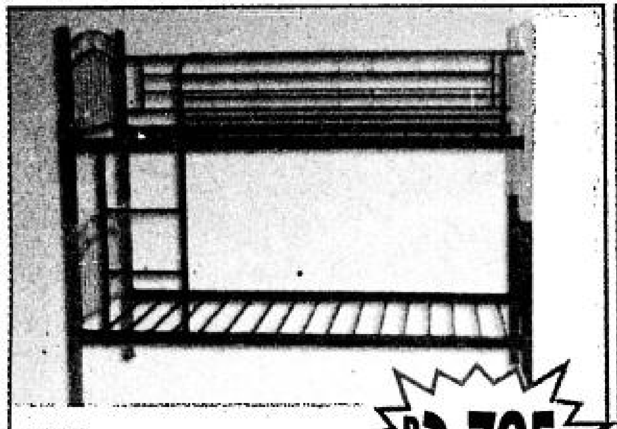

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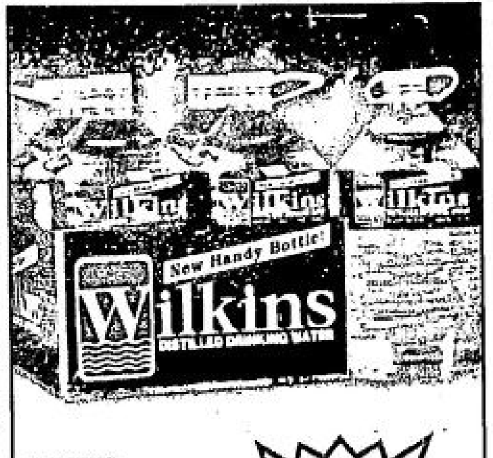
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BUSINESS

Raul O. Marcelo, Editor ■ **Corrie S. Narisma**, Assistant Editor

Task force to pursue ₱100B in unpaid taxes

By Clarissa S. Batino

FOUR government offices are jointly forming a task force to press the collection of more than P100 billion in back taxes from the Marcos family and its cronies, and former President Estrada and his associates.

The Department of Justice, the Office of the Solicitor General, the Presidential Commission on Good Government, and the Bureau of Internal Revenue are forming the task force to fast-track the collection of these taxes and help plug the government's deficit that could hit P225 billion this year.

In its meeting last Friday, the four agencies discussed the tax cases involving the Marcos estate, Fortune Tobacco Corp., BW Resources Corp., and cases against Estrada and his family.

The government is running after P43 billion in taxes from the Marcoses, P25.27 billion from Tan's flagship firm Fortune Tobacco, almost P1 billion from BW Resources and billions of pesos from Estrada's ill-gotten wealth.

The former President was alleged to have amassed P20 billion in assets in his two-and-a-half years in office. The assets reportedly included bank deposits and several mansions.

"The solicitor general likewise suggested that other properties which were identified to be owned by the former President and his mistresses which are not yet placed under constructive distraint be immediately covered in order to protect the interest of the government," a transcript of the meeting said.

The BIR had placed under a freeze order or constructive distraint several bank deposits of Estrada and his family.

The revenue-collection agency said it was now in the process of gathering evidence to support any tax assessment that would be issued to Estrada.

Fortune Tobacco has been accused of defrauding the government P25.27 billion in taxes during the time of President Fidel Ramos.

The amount allegedly represented unpaid value-added and ad valorem taxes as well as deficient income taxes from 1990 to 1992.

"The group decided to evaluate the evidence while awaiting for the decision of the Supreme Court on an earlier appeal made by the government. A study shall be undertaken on the remedies available to the government should a decision favorable to the taxpayer be handed down," the transcript said.

The options being studied on the Fortune Tobacco case included the possibility of re-filing a criminal case, conversion to a civil case or institution of both criminal and civil actions separately.

On the Marcos estate case, the four agencies agreed to identify properties and classify whether these were surrendered, sequestered, and those pending litigation.

"The BIR will provide the details of the assessment, its basis as well as available remedies for enforcement considering that assessment is already final and executory," the transcript said.

The BIR, during the time of Estrada, had sent Dante Tan and his associates a tax assessment of their liabilities worth about P950 million.

The BIR had completed the evaluation of the tax liabilities involved in the BW mess. It found out that Tan and his associates have failed to pay capital gains tax on their stock market and over-the-counter transactions in BW done in 1999.

Aside from Tan, also liable were eight stock brokerage companies that were found to have bought and sold BW stocks over-the-counter without paying taxes.

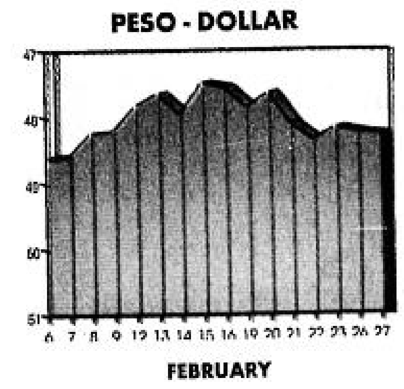
The liable stockbrokers were PCCI Securities, Securities 2000 Inc., AT De Castro Securities, Asia Securities Inc., Quality Investments Corp., Guild Securities, Armstrong Holdings Inc., and Angping and Associate Securities.

Tan, the brokers and 38 individuals were accused of insider trading and stock price manipulation. The local bourse witnessed an increase in BW's shares price by more than 1,000 percent.

"The group will also study the BW case which was reported by the (BIR) commissioner to have been covered either by informal conference letters or preliminary assessment notices," the transcript said.

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



Peso-Dollar Rate

₱48.265 = $1
As of 5 p.m., Feb. 27, 2001

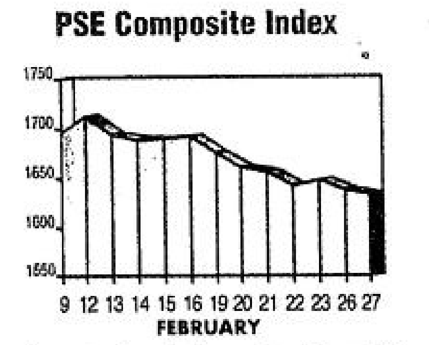
¥116.12 = $1
The US dollar was trading at 116.12 as of 5 p.m., Feb. 27, 2001

GOLD:$266.80/267.30
per ounce Hong Kong, Feb. 27, 2001

Feb. 27, 2001 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.097093	1.000000	48.0940
Japan	Yen	0.009426	0.008592	0.4132
United Kingdom	Pound	1.586177	1.445800	69.5343
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.140656	0.128208	6.1660
Switzerland	Franc	0.650784	0.593190	28.5289
Canada	Dollar	0.718274	0.654707	31.4875
Singapore	Dollar	0.629139	0.573460	27.5800
Australia	Dollar	0.572685	0.522002	25.1052
Bahrain	Dinar	2.910215	2.652661	127.5771
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.292527	0.266638	12.8237
Brunei	Dollar	0.627268	0.571755	27.4980
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000112	0.000102	0.0049
Thailand	Baht	0.025568	0.023305	1.1208
UAE	Dirham	0.298732	0.272294	13.0957
Korea	Won	0.000880	0.000802	0.0386
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.911500	43.8377
Germany	Mark	0.511292	0.466043	22.4139
France	Franc	0.152450	0.138957	6.6830
Netherlands	Guilder	0.453781	0.413621	19.8927
Austria	Schilling	0.072673	0.066241	3.1858
Belgium	Franc	0.024789	0.022595	1.0867
Italy	Lire	0.000517	0.000471	0.0227
Finland	Markka	0.168188	0.153303	7.3730
Portugal	Escudo	0.004988	0.004547	0.2187
Spain	Peseta	0.006010	0.005478	0.2635
Luxemburg	Franc	0.024789	0.022595	1.0867
Ireland	Punt	1.269738	1.157366	55.6624

STOCK MARKET

Stocks end down



(See stock market report on Page B6)

STOCKS edged lower in light trade yesterday with most investors waiting on the sidelines for cheaper levels to accumulate holdings.

The 33-share composite index slid 3.74 points, or 0.23 percent, to end at 1,632.30 after trading in a tight range of only about 16 points.

Turnover climbed to P546.68 million from P498.16 million with mostly local players participating in the market.

Despite the increase in volume, traders described turnover as light.

Losers edged out gainers, 34 to 32, while 54 issues were unchanged.

"Investors are still waiting for news, both on economic and political fronts. On the political front, they want the questions on the legitimacy of the new government out of the way," said Efren Cruz, fund manager of The Mutual Fund Management Co. of the Philippines.

"While we do see some improvement in terms of sentiment, I do believe we need the underlying economy to move in tandem with the sentiment," Cruz said. The Supreme Court has yet to rule on ousted leader Joseph Estrada's claim that he is the country's legitimate president, and is therefore immune from lawsuits, and President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is only an "acting president."

"There seems to be a sort of a passive sentiment prevailing in the market," said Oliver Plana, an analyst at Asiasec Equities Inc.

"It would seem that the market still has some downside, we are waiting for a better entry point. The market is bound to consolidate based on the charts," he added. *Reuters*

JG Summit, SMC unit sign deal

JG SUMMIT Petrochemical Corp. and Universal Robina Corp, both affiliates of JG Summit Holdings Inc., have finalized a supply and purchase agreement with San Miguel Packaging Products Corp (SMPP).

The deal is seen as a long-term strategic partnership for both San Miguel and JG Summit Holdings Inc.

Under the terms of agreement, SMPP has committed to buy 80 percent of their PE resins from JGSPC with deliveries commencing in March 2001. Pricing under the contract is formula based, which will provide SMPP resins at very competitive prices.

The deal also allows both JGSPC and SMPP to focus on operations and efficiency planning since a constant supply and off-take is assured for both parties.

The agreement also entails corresponding reciprocal business from URC, which would source some of its packaging requirements from SMPP.

JGSPC has been in operation for three years and is the leading local supplier of polyethylene and polypropylene resins, while SMPP is the leading supplier of packaging requirements to many local industries.

Wrong Velarde

DIRECT-TO-HOME video company Altimax said one of its part owners, Mel Velarde, had no connection with JV Ejercito or any relative of former President Joseph Estrada.

"You have got the wrong Velarde, Mr. Mel Velarde is not to be confused with Mike, (or Jose...) or any Velarde for that matter," said the statement of Internet firm OneVirtual Corp., where Velarde is chair and chief executive officer.

"We would also like to emphasize that Mel Velarde is not connected in any way to JV Ejercito, in the past and present. He is not a partner, or a friend. He is not even an acquaintance," the statement added.

The company likewise said Velarde was even behind the erapresign.com and that he was the producer of the People Power 2 Digital Library.

In a report on Feb. 26, the INQUIRER reported that "Altimax of Mel Velarde and JV Ejercito" was one of the companies that the group of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. was eyeing for possible acquisition.

DISPERSAL POLICY

Peza limits IT park perks

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE PHILIPPINE Economic Zone Authority (Peza) has decided to discontinue the granting of incentives to property developers of information technology parks and buildings in Metro Manila.

Peza Director General Lilia B. de Lima said the Peza board decided last month that only developers of IT parks and buildings built outside Metro Manila would be eligible for incentives in order to encourage the dispersal of IT investments outside Metro Manila.

De Lima, however, stressed that all locators in IT parks and IT buildings, regardless of location, would continue to enjoy full Peza incentives.

This meant that only Fort Bonifacio Development Corp. (developer of the P16.25-billion Silicon Alley IT Park); Empire East Land Holdings Inc. (P40-billion Eastwood City Cyberpark in Quezon City); and Filinvest Land Inc. (P50-billion Northgate Cyberzone in Alabang) would be eligible for IT park incentives in Metro Manila.

De Lima said that the Ayala-controlled Cebu Property Ventures and Development Corp. could still get full incentives for its planned IT park on a 23.7-hectare property in Barangay Apas and Lahug, Cebu City, as an IT zone but Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. would not get incentives for the RCBC Plaza in Makati.

The new Peza directive would fine-tune the agency's policy on IT zones and companies. Last year, the Peza board agreed to consider even mere buildings—with at least 25,000 square meters of floor area allocated for IT service exporters—as IT economic zones, which normally should cover at least 5 hectares. The RCBC Tower was the first to enjoy this Peza directive.

These moves are part of the government's drive to push the development of the IT sector, which is one of the country's few strengths in the world market.

The Board of Investments has already made IT firms eligible for pioneer incentives such as income tax breaks of up to eight years even though they cater solely to the domestic market starting last year. Previously, IT companies only enjoyed fiscal perks if they were export-oriented firms.

Water utilities to recover losses from peso decline

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE MWSS Regulatory Office and the two private water concessionaires have agreed in principle to put in place an automatic currency exchange rate adjustment (Cera) mechanism.

The scheme will help Manila Water Co. Inc. and Maynilad Water Services Inc. recover losses arising from the depreciation in the value of the peso against foreign currencies.

It will be similar to the foreign currency fluctuation charges implemented by other utility firms engaged in electricity distribution such as Manila Electric Co. and telecommunication companies.

According to MWSS chief regulator Rex Tantiongco, the Board of Trustees and the Executive Committee have agreed that an automatic Cera be granted as a relief to the loss-making concessionaires.

"This would be a relief for Maynilad and Manila

WATER/ B6

Cojuangco seen keeping SMC post

By Doris C. Dumlao

BUSINESSMAN Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco may be able to keep his hold on San Miguel Corp. after all as Malacañang admitted that it did not have enough voting rights to unseat him as chair of the food and beverage giant.

No less than President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo said Monday night that the government did not have enough bullets to engage in a proxy fight to oust Cojuangco, a close associate of ousted President Joseph Estrada.

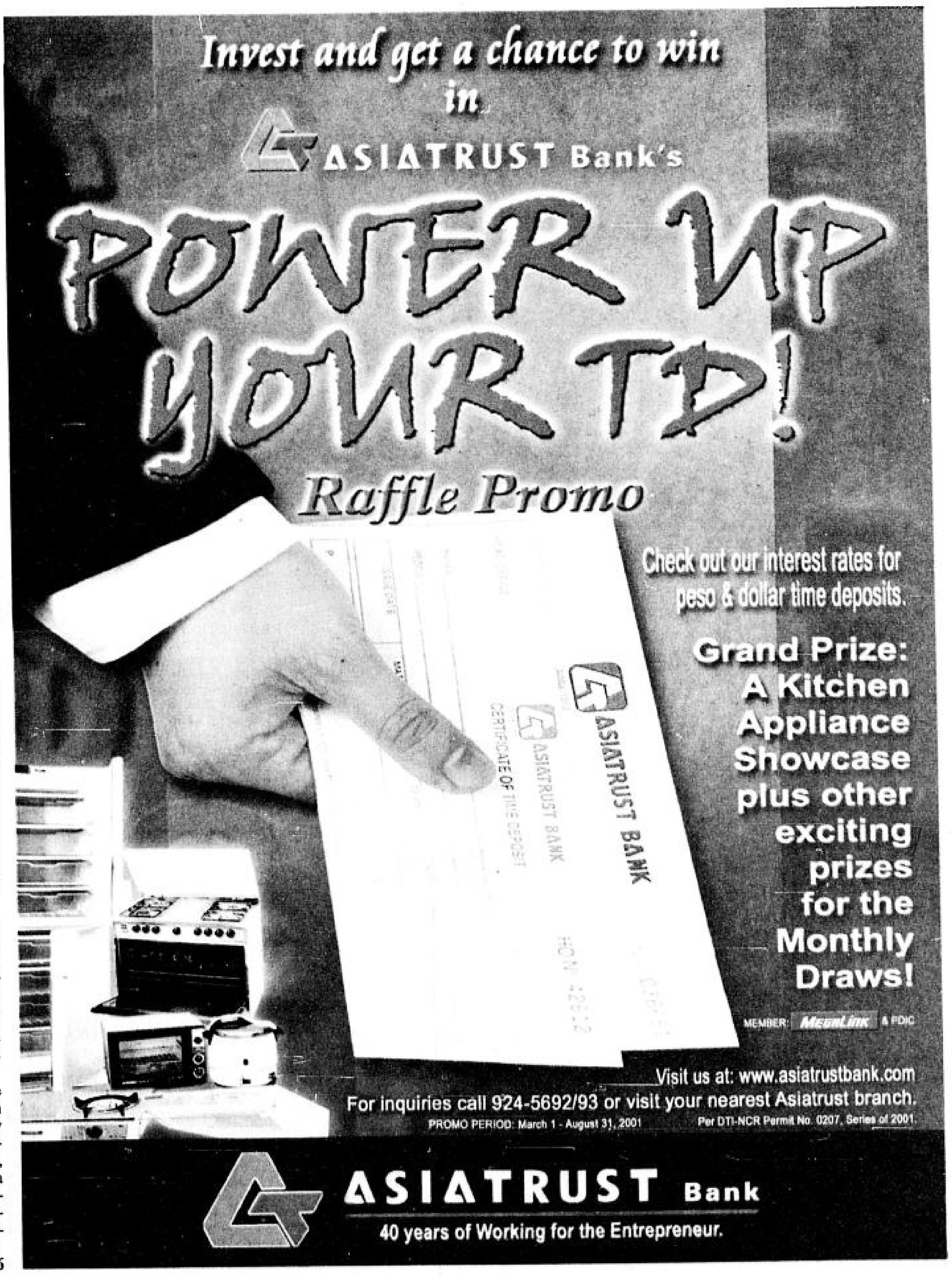
"The government does not have enough shares to elect a new chairman," Macapagal told reporters.

Well-placed sources, however, said that a government nominee might be voted during the next stockholders' meeting this May 3 to replace Cojuangco's right-hand man Ramon Ang as vice chair of SMC. The sources said that among those being eyed to replace Ang was former Social Security System president Renato Valencia.

The Supreme Court has already recognized Cojuangco's direct ownership of 20 percent of San Miguel shares while another 27 percent contested block is under the government's sequestration.

The 27-percent stake was said to have been purchased with money from the Coconut Industry Investment Fund, which was set up as a depository for taxes imposed on coconut producers by the late President Ferdinand Marcos.

COJUANGCO/ B6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BSP sees $100M in BOP surplus this year

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE COUNTRY'S balance of payment is expected to register this year a surplus of less than $100 million, a turnaround from the $1-billion deficit last year.

A senior official of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said that the much improved investor confidence in the country was expected to push both direct and portfolio investments up. This, he said, would lead to the improvement in the country's balance-of-payment position.

A BOP surplus means capital inflow (arising from transactions with other countries and bilateral creditors) is more than the outflow.

In 1999, the BOP surplus hit $3.84 billion but this was wiped out last year at the height of the political and economic instability under the then Estrada administration. As of end-November last year, the BOP deficit stood at $918 million.

"Based on our estimates, the BOP will likely post a surplus of less than $100 million largely because of the improved sentiment which would tame the deficit if not completely turn around the numbers," the official said.

The BSP said the BOP surplus estimate would likely be presented to the International Monetary Fund once the country enters into the post program monitoring process.

As of end-November last year, the deficit in financial account grew to $4.96 billion from $4.3 billion the previous month and $693 million a year ago as portfolio investments slipped out of the country at the height of the political crisis.

The BSP said it would improve the monitoring of external accounts in order to capture a more accurate data that should help improve the BOP figures.

The data in the financial and capital accounts, for instance, include net unclassified items or what the industry refers to as errors and omissions.

A foreign investment bank has interpreted errors and omissions as another indication of capital flight.

The level of errors and omissions increased to $3.58 billion in end-November last year from $3.45 billion in the same period the previous year, BSP data showed.

The IMF had earlier expressed doubts on the accuracy of the economic growth figures being released by the government because of a lax reporting system.

The BSP said that the IMF believed that the growth targets could be more accurate if the data were gathered properly.

PNB to pursue reorganization

THE PHILIPPINE National Bank is implementing a special separation plan to reduce operating costs as part of its rehabilitation program. This will be complemented by a retirement fund to provide benefits for personnel who may wish to look for new opportunities outside the bank in the future. The bank did not have any retirement fund after it was privatized in 1996.

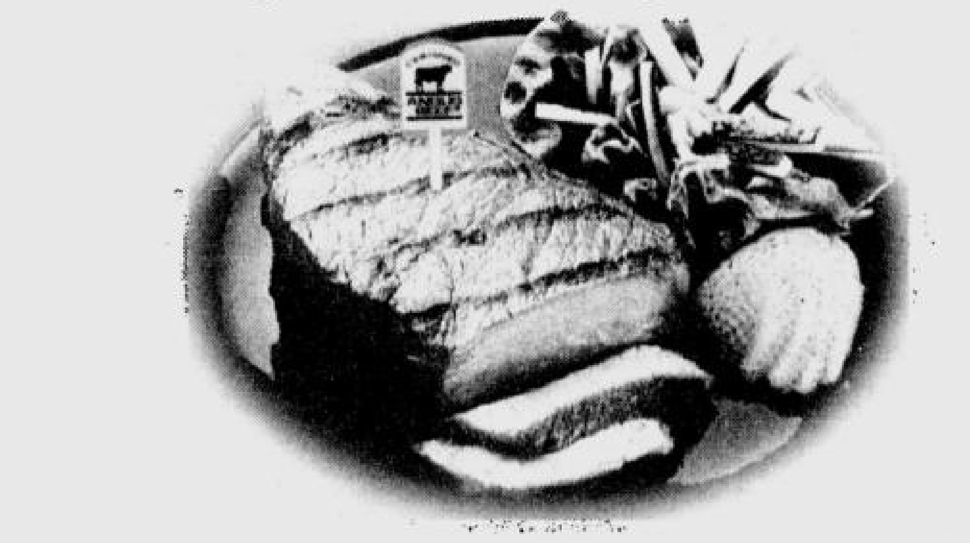
Feliciano L. Miranda Jr., PNB president and CEO, said that the bank's reorganization, including personnel reduction, is a requirement of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas since PNB has a high compensation ratio.

Miranda added that PNB'S personnel rightsizing should have been implemented since a year ago as part of BSP requirements but was deferred. The PNB, instead, adopted other cost-cutting measures as initial solution to the need to reduce administrative expenses and in view of the absence of a viable separation plan.

PNB practically has no choice now but to undertake such a program more so in view of difficult economic conditions which have adversely affected the bank's revenue levels," Miranda said.

PNB currently has more than 8,800 employees in its head office and 324 domestic branches.

After PNB's rightsizing, the PNB management will undertake re-training of its personnel among its priority programs designed to raise the level of professionalism and competency in its workforce.



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SMC within SMC

COCKTALES

By Victor C. Agustin

UNLESS it undertakes a coup similar to what the Cojuangco bloc did shortly after Erap took power in June 1998, Malacañang may have no legal ground to elect a new set of nominees to the San Miguel Corp. board in this May's stockholders' meeting.

Reason? The deadline for the submission of nominees had already lapsed, the deadline being set Jan. 30, nearly a month ago.

Faced with this legal hurdle, Finance Secretary Alberto Romulo has directed lawyer Antonio Picazo to study how this may be surmounted.

Picazo's tentative recommendation, according to the grapevine, is to appeal to the Securities and Exchange Commission to set aside the SMC by-law provision "in view of the change in control over substantial blocs of SMC shares with the change in government."

Meanwhile, the Macapagal-Arroyo advance party in San Miguel has already confirmed the existence of a select group controlling the purchasing and funds disbursement of the country's largest conglomerate despite the group being outside the organizational framework of San Miguel.

This SMC-within-SMC is Centech, the engineering company controlled by San Miguel vice chair Ramon Ang, the same company that hired and paid the contractors of the fabulous Wack Wack mansion of Laarni Enriquez.

With the assumption to power of former Ambassador Eduardo Cojuangco Jr. as San Miguel chair, Centech has become the de facto purchasing unit for the entire San Miguel conglomerate as well as the non-listed Cojuangco companies.

Nominally headed by one Mario Surio, Centech handles all purchases in excess of P1 million for both the SMC and Cojuangco companies, in addition to taking charge of the bidding and selection of contractors for all major construction projects of the SMC Group.

In addition to Centech, SMC also signed a management contract with another Ang company, Total Management Inc., whose chief accountant, Aurora Calderon, has become the de facto chief treasurer of the San Miguel Group.

Cloudy Sky

WE have received a copy of an inter-office e-mail from CNBC Asia showing that it was indeed the Lopezes' Sky Cable (is that you, Juno Henares?) that unilaterally dropped the popular channel from its programming.

"CNBC as part of its renewal discussions with Sky offered to continue the previous contractual terms with Sky Cable and its affiliates for a limited time of three months in order to get us clear of the political and economic uncertainty of the change in administrations from Estrada to Arroyo and give us a breathing space to negotiate a longer-term deal," said Alan Hodges, CNBC Asia's head of distribution.

"We even agreed to the unprecedented step of denominating the deal in pesos and effectively prevented any forex losses for Sky Cable by pegging it to P45 to the dollar," the Hodges memo continued.

"Sky Cable's counteroffer was 50 percent of our offer and required CNBC to become a subscription channel out of the basic package which would effectively reduce our subscription numbers from Sky Cable by my optimistic estimates to probably 15 percent of our then existing subscribers.

"You can imagine how disappointed we were.

"Sky Cable then sent me an e-mail terminating the service," Hodges said.

Go figure

AFTER having been publicly rebuked by his own bank, it now turns out that former Equitable PCI Bank chair George Go had been truthful all along as regards the extent of withdrawals the bank suffered during the impeachment hearings.

Remember the clandestine interview with Reuters? Go, who was then in hiding, told the British news agency that both the panic and punitive withdrawals from depositors had sapped Jose Velarde's favorite bank roughly P32 billion.

Alarmed Equitable PCI Bank officials, led no less by its chair then, Ricardo Romulo of the Makati Business Club, quickly rebuked Go over the figure, saying he was no longer current with the bank affairs.

The bankers even suggested that Reuters had misheard Go and that the figure was only P3.2 billion, not P32 billion as had been reported.

Now that the storm has passed and Jose Velarde no longer a threat to the health of the bank and the bank officials themselves, the Equitable PCI Bank bosses are now sheepishly admitting that, whoops, it is they, sorry, who all along have gotten their decimal point all wrong.

Sand trapped

THE NORMALLY glib Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile could not give a straight and simple answer as to what fate awaits buyers of shares in the suspendido Splendido Taal Golf Club.

For those who had gathered enough courage to ask the former martial law administrator straight to his face, the gentleman from Cagayan could only give a cryptic "wait until after the elections."

That was his stock reply when his buddy in Malacañang was still riding high, bellowing his "kangkungan" threat. (A certain Jose Velarde, if you believe the text brigade, was supposed to also bail out the Jaka Building, another suspended Ponce Enrile project, on Ayala Avenue.)

The problem with the buyers of Splendido shares is that like a bad marriage, they are stuck with the senator through thick and thin.

They could not return the shares even if they want to—a secondary market could not be developed since the ambitious golf course remains unfinished—because of the fine print in the contract that termination may be made "only by mutual consent of the parties."

Heard through the grapevine

A SPOKESMAN for The Country Club said it was the Manila Golf Club, not them, that sought out a possible merger between the two most exclusive clubs in the country.

The spokesman also clarified that it is the developer, not The Country Club, that has exposure to Far East Bank, borrowings which have so far remained current.

Out of the 220 members of The Country Club, 80 are also members of Manila Golf.

(Cocktales may be reached by e-mail at cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or at cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

Local group moves to boost IT sector

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

IN A BID to jumpstart the Philippine information technology industry, a group of Filipino investors led by ePLDT Inc. and Project Quest Inc. are bringing to the country NIIT (National Institute for Information Technology) Ltd. of India, one of the world's leading IT schools and software developers, to provide Filipinos with world-class IT education and software programming skills.

ePLDT is the corporate vehicle of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. for its Internet-based activities while Project Quest is a venture capital firm led by former Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. president Francisco Dizon. They formed Mind Stream Inc., along with entrepreneur Bartolome "Jay" Silayan and New York investment banker Benedict Perez, which is the Philippine licensee of NIIT.

Silayan said that the Philippines could only sustain its status as a leading source of IT professions if Filipinos get the best education and training. "We want to contribute to the development of the Philippines as a software development base. We feel that it is critical to create a ground swell of skilled IT professionals with world class standards in the Philippines."

Silayan, managing director of Mind Stream, said his group chose NIIT because of its significant role in harnessing India for the IT business and its unique concept of weaving IT education with practical experience through direct contact with leading corporations.

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LOCAL/ B4

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Makati Sports A/B*	400,000	450,000/500,000*
Manila Polo	3,200,000	
Manila Southwoods A/B*	850,000/900,000*	
Orchard "A"	-	330,000
Puerto Azul	130,000	140,000
Quezon City Sports	230,000	
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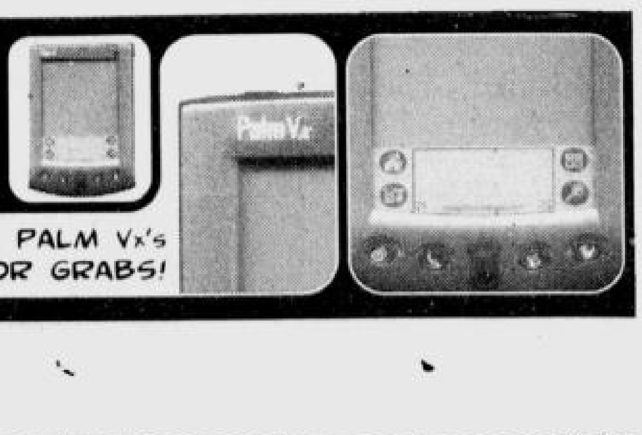

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SC urged to reverse order on Bayantel case

By Anthony O. Alcantara

LOPEZ-OWNED Bayan Telecommunications Inc. will ask the Supreme Court to reverse the decision of the Court of Appeals nullifying the company's provisional authority to offer cellular phone services.

Edgardo R. Balbin, Bayantel vice president for legal affairs, yesterday said the CA penned a decision on Feb. 9 denying Bayantel's motion for reconsideration for lack of merit.

"We have no other recourse but to appeal the decision to the Supreme Court. We hope they (Supreme Court) will sustain our arguments and reverse the decision considering that Bayantel was sued together with the NTC (National Telecommunications Commission)," said Balbin.

It was the NTC that granted Bayantel the provisional authority to offer cellular phone service.

Balbin said Bayantel had 15 days after receiving a copy of the order on Feb. 26 to file its ordinary appeal to the Supreme Court. If the Supreme Court would rule unfavorably, Bayantel still has one last chance by filing a motion for reconsideration.

Balbin said Bayantel's plan to launch its cellular phone business this year would depend on how fast the Supreme Court decides on the case.

In nullifying Bayantel's provisional authority, the Court of Appeals acted on the case filed by its Express Telecommunications Inc.

Extelcom said Bayantel's entry into the cellular phone business would adversely affect its operations, adding that there was an increasingly small market for five existing players in the industry.

Meanwhile, Bayantel has sought the restructuring of at least $500 million in debts as a result of the 1997 Asian financial crisis, the continuing depreciation of the peso and the poor subscriber uptake.

Carlos V. Tria Jr., managing director of the Lopez Group's Integrated Broadband Services, said in an earlier interview that the company hired Bank of America to help in the restructuring of the debts.

"We are also talking to possible local and foreign partners to come in. Some of the principal payments are falling due this year," he said, adding that the company hoped to come up with the debt restructuring plan in the first quarter of 2001.

Foreign currency-denominated debts accounted for the bulk of the company's total obligations.

Philexport, CIBI sign joint service agreement

THE PHILIPPINE Exporters Confederation Inc. (Philexport), in its effort to further enhance its services to the industry, has signed a memorandum of agreement with the Credit Intelligence Bureau Inc. allowing access to information on local and foreign companies whom exporters wish to do business with.

The three-year agreement was signed by Philexport president Sergio R. Ortiz-Luis Jr. and CIBI president/CEO Cayetano W. Paderanga Jr.

CIBI, a private credit bureau, has established an online, systematic and up-to-date information relevant and vital to business decisions. It applies structured mechanisms for the organized supply of business information.

Aside from the basic contact information, CIBI's database offers appraisal and property verification, debt collection, business education, and related training programs. The directory of Philexport members, which will also be in the dBase, will be updated every six months.

The agreement likewise contains a confidentiality clause on some information, prohibiting the reproduction of such data through electronic, mechanical, photocopying and recording. *Philexport News & Features*

Local group moves . . .

(From page B3)

a global software solutions company; NIIT does IT consulting work for many Fortune 500 companies. All this learning from the real world is brought back to the classroom environment through NIIT's education centers," Silayan said. "This is what will set us apart from other computer schools."

NIIT was established in 1981 by NIIT chair Rajendra Pawar as a "knowledge business" to provide world-class IT education to India's growing population. It has since grown to become one of India's largest software products companies.

NIIT has trained an estimated one million students and professionals across five continents and is present in more than 80 percent of the world's IT market. NIIT has training alliances with Microsoft, Oracle and Computer Associates and its clients include Microsoft, British Airways, Sony, Sun Microsytems, Toshiba and World Bank.

Silayan said NIIT's software development capabilities have been rated a level 5 by the Software Engineering Institute's Capability Maturity Model for software process capability and only 12 companies in the world have this accreditation."

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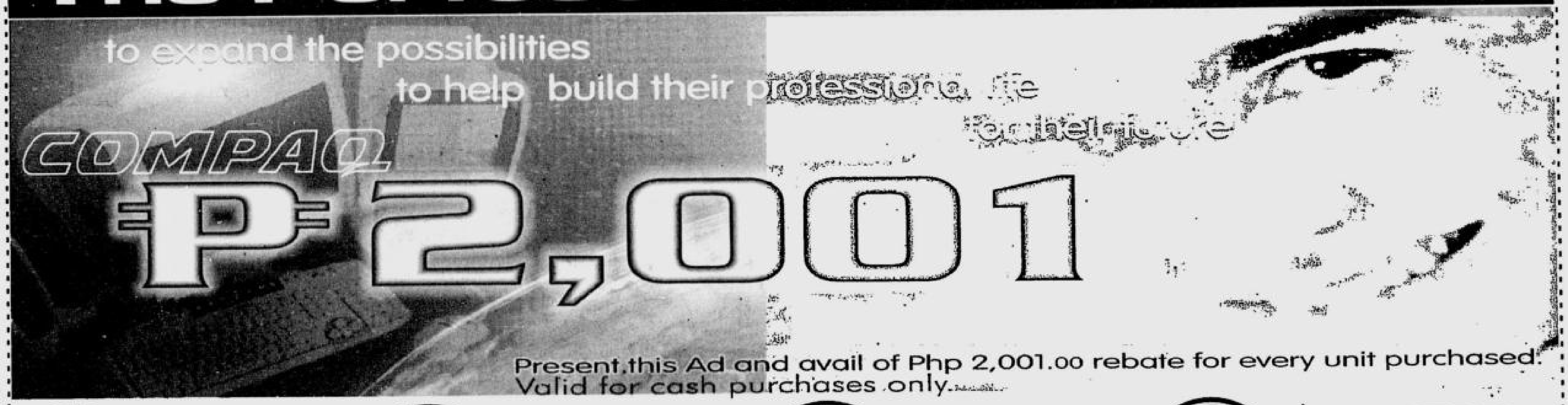
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ANVIL AWARDS FOR SGV

SGV & Co. chair Cesar V. Purisima (center) and SGV Marketing Director Marlu Balmaceda (4th from left) receive the awards won by the company in the recent Public Relations Society of the Philippines' 36th Anvil Awards. SGV bagged the Award of Excellence for its investment brochure Doing Business in the Philippines and the Award of Merit for its SGV Recruitment Video. With Purisima and Balmaceda are Supreme Court Justice Artemio Panganiban and officers of PRSP.

TRANSPARENCY ASSURED

Gov't steps up campaign to lure foreign investors

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

TRADE Secretary Manuel A. Roxas II has assured foreign investors that the Macapagal administration was committed to enforcing full transparency in all government transactions.

In a forum sponsored by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong, Roxas said one of the government's main goal was to improve the public sector's moral standards to create a fertile ground for good governance and prevent any economic gains from being dissipated by corruption.

"The new government is firmly committed to an economic philosophy of transparency and private enterprise to level the playing field and promote competition. This is a strong signal to investors that they can now look forward to doing profitable business in our country with full confidence over the long term," Roxas said.

Roxas is in Hong Kong as part of the new Cabinet's strategy of luring back foreign investors who abandoned the country during the two-and-a-half years of the Estrada administration due to cronyism and incompetence.

One of this administration's core beliefs is on leadership by example, which Roxas said was pegged on the observance of "a solid work ethic and a dignified lifestyle."

Roxas was first appointed to the Department of Trade and Industry by ousted President Joseph Estrada in January last year but he resigned from the Cabinet at the height of the "jueteng" scandal in October last year. President Macapagal named him to a second tour of duty in the DTI shortly after she took over Malacañang.

Roxas said the new government's resolve for transparency was evident in President Macapagal's first administrative order which prohibits all public officials and employees from entering into official transactions involving contracts, supplies and appointments to positions with presidential relatives.

To discourage shady deals with crony corporations and individuals, Malacañang has relinquished its authority to review large contracts to the Investment Coordinating Council led by the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda).

"Open public bidding of these contracts will now be SOP (standard operating procedure) instead of the practice of negotiated bids which proliferated in the past," Roxas said. "Learning from the lessons of our immediate past, we shall enact measures to fight money laundering to prevent another financial crisis."

SEC asked to clear Uniwide's payment-in-kind agreements

By Elena R. Torrijos

THE UNITED Coconut Planters Bank is asking the Securities and Exchange Commission to approve arrangements that will allow the Uniwide group of companies to settle some P1 billion in debts by paying in kind.

Uniwide has agreed to hand over real estate to UCPB, International Exchange Bank, and Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. to settle debts it owed these banks.

The retailer asked the SEC to approve agreements it signed with the three banks, which were drawn up in line with an amended rehabilitation plan approved a year ago.

The rehabilitation plan, however, had hinged on a P3.5-billion capital infusion from French retailer Casino Guichard-Perrachon SA, which recently abandoned talks with Uniwide citing an uncertain political climate in the Philippines.

In a comment filed on Monday, UCPB asked the SEC to approve Uniwide's payment-in-kind offer to its creditors. The bank said the offer was a "self-sacrifice" that Uniwide was willing to make to settle its obligations to both its secured and unsecured creditors.

Uniwide is offering to hand over assets to settle P1 billion of some P11 billion in debts.

"Needless to say, this will make Uniwide more attractive to investors and support Uniwide's return to and concentration in the retail business," UCPB said.

The bank added that the SEC's approval would reflect the government's commitment to rehabilitate Uniwide instead of shut the retailer down.

Some of Uniwide's large creditors, however, have opposed separate arrangements that Uniwide was making with UCPB, I-Bank and Metrobank.

Universal Robina Corp. argued that allowing the three banks to be favored in that they would be paid ahead than other creditors was "clearly prejudicial to the interest of other creditors."

"Moreover, allowing the dacion en pago scheme will lessen the participation of the three banks in the distribution of losses which is again revolting to the principle of equity," URC said.

S&P keeps Napocor's negative rating

HONG KONG—Standard & Poor's yesterday affirmed its triple-'B' local currency rating and its double-'B'-plus foreign currency rating on National Power Corp. The outlook on both ratings remains negative.

The ratings on Napocor reflect the unconditional guarantee of the utility's external debt and other forms of support from the Philippine government.

Napocor is a government owned generation and transmission company, and is the dominant power provider in the Philippines.

NPC owns 5,055 mw of installed capacity with an additional 7,590 mw of generation available from independent power producers (IPPs).

Weak financial results in fiscal 2000, coupled with further delays in the development of a legislation supporting the privatization of the Philippine electricity industry, raise concerns regarding the stability of Napocor's operating and financial performance.

For fiscal 2000, the power agency expects to report a net loss exceeding P11 billion and generate a return on utility assets of about 4 percent.

This marks the third consecutive year of net operating losses for the utility and will leave the company in violation of lending covenants with multilateral lenders, which require a return on assets of 7 to 8 percent.

While a portion of the loss is expected to be noncash in nature—arising from balance sheet re-valuations triggered by the devaluation of the peso—a portion of the loss will also reflect increased interest expense associated with Napocor's foreign currency debt obligations.

Increases in interest expense cannot be passed along to consumers and will have a net cash impact on the company.

Significant improvement in its operating performance is not expected until the government initiates industry restructuring plans.

Draft bills for the deregulation of the electricity industry are being revised following the assumption of power by the Macapagal administration on Jan. 20.

Napocor will continue to bear the obligation of providing power to the Philippine populace, complete with the assumption of debt either directly or indirectly through contracts with independent power producers, until a new industry structure is implemented.

Such increased liabilities will have a negative impact on Napocor's already weak financial profile. In the absence of restructuring plans, regulators are also unlikely to offer substantial tariff support to Napocor.

Despite the existing weakness in Napocor's operating and financial profile, the rating continues to be supported by the government's direct guarantee on the company's debt obligations and performance undertaking on purchased power agreements.

This support helps to mitigate its weak profitability, high debt levels, and exposure to foreign exchange risk. A strong level of government support also helps insulate Napocor from uncertainty over industry reform.

The outlook on the agency was revised to negative following the outlook change for the Republic of the Philippines in October 2000. The outlook also incorporates expected weak financial performance by the power agency in 2000 and delays in implementing the Omnibus Power Bill, Standard & Poor' said.

Reuters

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Jollibee raises stake in unit

By Doris C. Dumlao

FAST-FOOD giant Jollibee Foods Corp. is beefing up its investments in Bakers Fresh Foods Philippines Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary engaged in the retailing of its Delifrance brand.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, Jollibee said it would subscribe to 105,920 new shares of Bakers Fresh at an issue price of P1,000 per share or a total amount of P106 million.

This is in line with the increase in the authorized capital stock of Bakers Fresh from 50,000 to 210,000 shares at a par value of P100 per share. The capital expansion, in turn, is intended to accommodate the possible entry of foreign investors in the future now that the retail trade sector in the country has been liberalized.

Jollibee thus agreed to take up the new shares to be issued by Bakers Fresh while no foreign strategic investor was in sight yet.

High-end bakery Delifrance is among the brands under the Jollibee group, which also includes hamburger chain Jollibee, Chinese fast-food chain Chowking and pizza chain Greenwich. The group is the undisputed leader in the fast-food business in the Philippines.

For this year, the Jollibee group is planning to further expand the branch network of its various brands: 40 to 45 stores for Jollibee; 30 to 35 for Chowking; 15 to 20 for Greenwich, and five to 15 for Delifrance.

For the year 2000, Jollibee posted a net income after tax of P303 million, 3.3 percent lower than the level recorded in 1999. Consolidated revenues rose 19.2 percent to P15.4 billion during the year.

Of the P1.5 billion in total capital expenditures planned for this year, the Jollibee brand would get P350 million while Chowking would get P150 million to P200 million. The remaining budget after deducting the P700-million portion earmarked for the commissary will go to Greenwich and Delifrance.

After a difficult year in 2000, Jollibee expects to chalk up about 15-percent growth in profits this year. The outlook is seen to be rosier this year especially amid the expected rise in consumer spending linked to the forthcoming senatorial and local elections.

Jollibee, which is set to hit its 400th store-mark this year, is gearing up for further expansion and would finally start the construction of a manufacturing and distribution facility.

La Tondeña allots ₱1B to expand operations

LA TONDEÑA Distillers Inc., the beverage subsidiary of food and beverage giant San Miguel Corp., is spending about P1 billion to expand its operations this year.

LTDI president Enrique Gomez Jr. yesterday said this year's capital expenditure, which was roughly within the same level spent in 2000, would be used to improve operations and increase capacity. However, it still excluded funds that might be needed for new acquisitions.

He said that like its parent conglomerate, LTDI was still on the lookout for good acquisition targets within its line of product expertise. Last year, SMC and LTDI jointly acquired powdered juice and water gel manufacturer Sugarland Multifoods Corp., which has been renamed Sugarland Beverage Corp.

During the launching of new powdered iced tea brand Magnolia by Sugarland, Gomez said LTDI was keen on launching four to five new products this year. For instance, he said LTDI was developing a new product that would compete with high-end mixed drinks such as the popular vodka-beer Mule.

In the case of Sugarland, the company has decided to venture into the iced tea category because product concentrate was the fastest growing category in the non-liquor segment of the beverage industry.

"We are now expanding our turf to include iced tea, because in this gold mine of a category, iced tea has consistently shown impressive growth," Sugarland marketing head Vincent Concio said.

Meanwhile, SMC yesterday declined to comment on a report that it was planning to spin off its non-alcoholic beverage products into Sugarland where it is keen on taking in Coca Cola Co. of Atlanta as a strategic partner.

Gomez said the SMC group has yet to firm up what role Coke Atlanta would take in its ventures now that they have jointly taken over Coca Cola Bottlers Philippines Inc.

In a separate disclosure, SMC said: "The company declines to comment on the news report. It is the company's policy not to comment on reports involving acquisitions or divestitures, as it is difficult to predict whether prospective deals will proceed or not proceed as planned."

Well-placed industry sources earlier said SMC was considering to transfer all of the non-alcoholic beverages directly into Sugarland, which has already been renamed for this purpose.

As such, the emerging plan is for the SMC to control 60 to 65 percent of the spun off Sugarland while 30 to 35 percent would be offered to Coke Atlanta. Analysts said the plan would serve as a litmus test to the synergy between SMC and Coke Atlanta in handling the beverage business for bigger ventures in the future.

Coke Atlanta is also keen on eventually acquiring a minority stake in LTDI. If CCBPI were folded into LTDI, its 35-percent stake in the local bottler could be converted into a minority stake in LTDI.

One of the very few local stocks favored by investors even amid the slump in the stock market last year, LTDI posted consolidated sales revenues of P14.2 billion in 2000, 34 percent higher than its level the previous year. Double-digit revenue growth was registered across all product categories: 14 percent for liquor, 47 percent for bottled water and 318 percent for juice.

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

Top 10 commercial banks by capital

(4th quarter 2000, in billion pesos)

Rank	Commercial Banks	Q4	Q3	% Change
1	Bank of the Philippine Islands	51.2	48.7	5.0
2	Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co.	46.8	47.1	-0.7
3	Equitable-PCI Bank	46.2	45.6	1.2
4	Philippine National Bank	23.3	13.0	79.5
5	Landbank	16.9	16.8	0.3
6	Development Bank of the Phils.	15.5	15.2	1.4
7	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	13.7	13.9	-1.6
8	Allied Bank	12.9	13.0	-0.6
9	Unionbank	11.9	11.8	0.5
10	Chinabank	11.7	11.6	0.6

Source: Published statements of condition and BSP

Bank of the Philippine Islands was the number one commercial bank in terms of capital from second to fourth quarters last year. Philippine National Bank's capital stock jumped by over 83 percent to P22.7 billion, enabling it to move up to fourth from seventh place. Dropping from the top 10 was United Coconut Planters Banking which had a 9 percent drop in capital accounts from P11.8 billion to P10.7 billion.

Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research

Cojuangco . . .

(From page B1)

Under a compromise with the Estrada administration, Cojuangco will keep the 20-percent stake in SMC while the government will be allowed to put the remaining 27 percent on the auction block. However, the government has not been able to sell the remaining 27 percent as the Sandiganbayan did not affirm the compromise deal.

On top of the 27-percent contested stake currently held by the government, the government holds through sequestration another 3-percent stake in SMC. State-pension funds SSS and Government Service Insurance System also own a combined 13 percent in SMC.

This brings to 43 percent the shares the government can use to vote during SMC's stockholders' meeting as against Cojuangco's 27 percent.

Macapagal's statement was read by some market analysts as an indication that the new administration was not keen on ousting Cojuangco, who has gained the market's vote of confidence on his management of SMC during the last two years.

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Water . . .

(From page B1)

Water because the debts they inherited from the old MWSS worth $800 million ballooned with the peso's fall. This is an unforeseen circumstance on their part," Tantiongco said.

Maynilad, a joint venture between the Lopez conglomerate and Suez Lyonnaise des Eaux of France, said its losses from 1997 to 2000 had amounted to P2.2 billion.

"The automatic Cera mechanism would allow the water concessionaires to pass on any losses resulting from foreign exchange fluctuations without having to petition the MWSS," Maynilad president Rafael Alunan III said.

Tantiongco said that the MWSS was still finalizing the formula for the Cera scheme for Maynilad and Manila Water.

MWSS administrator Antonio Mabanta said in a separate interview that they would not amend the concessionaire agreement but rather create a separate memorandum or attachment to include the Cera mechanism.

The Manila Water concession area covers Makati, Mandaluyong, San Juan, Angono, Baras, Binangonan, Cainta, Cardona, Jalajala, Morong, Pililia, Rodriguez, San Mateo, Tanay, Taytay, and parts of Markina, Taguig, Pasig, Pateros and Quezon City.

The Benpres-led consortium of Maynilad covers Manila, Pasay, Las Piñas, Malabon, Muntinlupa, Valenzuela, Navotas, Parañaque, Bacoor, Kawit, Imus, Cavite City, Noveleta, Rosario and parts of Taguig and Quezon City.

According to Alunan, the rate adjustment was needed to augment their finances and higher expenditures caused by the peso's depreciation.

Philippine Stock Exchange

(As of Tuesday, February 27, 2001)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Bank of the Phil. Islands	70	70	69	69	360,600
China Banking Corp.	680	680	680	680	32,440
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	56	56	55.5	55.5	33,900
Global Business Bank Inc	68	69	68	69	3,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	220	220	217	218	60,400
Philippine National Bank	40	41	40	41	184,600
Phil. Savings Bank	30	30	30	30	58,500
Security Bank Corp.	23.75	23.75	23.75	23.75	2,300
Union Bank of the Phil.	27.5	27.5	26.5	26.5	24,200
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	31,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	220	250	220	250	4,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1200	1240	1200	1240	9,270
Sun Life Financial Serv.	975	990	975	990	7,410
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	48.5	48.5	48.5	48.5	13,200
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	0.66	0.66	0.65	0.65	2,110,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	700	700	700	700	920
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	1,800,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	180,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	30,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	815	815	810	810	55,430
Ivantage Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	400,000
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.07	0.075	0.07	0.0725	110,600,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	53	53.5	53	53.5	5,000
Manila Electric Co. B	62	62.5	61.5	61.5	282,500
Petron Corp.	1.94	1.94	1.88	1.88	2,319,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.92	0.92	0.92	0.92	10,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.14	1.14	1.12	1.12	174,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	1.36	1.38	1.36	1.36	1,692,000
William, Gothong & Aboitiz	2	2	2	2	50,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Alsons Cement Corp.	0.25	0.27	0.25	0.27	60,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.87	0.87	0.87	0.87	24,920,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	99,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	11.5	11.75	11.5	11.75	169,400
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	38	38.5	38	38.5	123,300
RFM Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.28	1.28	385,000
San Miguel Corp. A	49.5	50	49.5	50	16,200
San Miguel Corp. B	59	59.5	59	59.5	129,200
Vitarich Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	100,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.58	150,000
Ayala Corp.	8	8	7.8	7.8	1,219,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	1.6	1.6	1.58	1.58	1,997,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	12	12.25	12	12	900
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	1.02	1.02	1	1	70,000
APC Group Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.235	0.235	1,640,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	9,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	3	3	2.95	2.95	56,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	12	13	12	13	10,500
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	50,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	2,198,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	460,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.51	0.53	0.5	0.53	630,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.48	1.5	1.46	1.46	857,000
First Phil. Hldgs. Corp.	23.5	23.5	23	23	222,400
Global Equities Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.34	0.34	850,000
Ionics Inc.	13.75	13.75	13.5	13.5	7,500
Ipeople Inc.	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	50,000
Ipeople Inc. B	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	60,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	1,160,000
Macroasia Corp.	2	2	2	2	16,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	500,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.017	0.018	0.017	0.018	2,000,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.93	0.93	0.91	0.92	2,790,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.63	0.64	0.61	0.61	5,350,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.72	0.72	0.72	0.72	310,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	20,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	1,200,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.29	0.32	0.29	0.31	3,000,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.42	1.42	1.42	1.42	50,000
Macondray Plastics Inc.	6.9	6.9	6.9	6.9	3,000
Music Corp.	3.15	3.15	3.1	3.1	145,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.81	0.81	0.81	0.81	160,000
Pryce Corp.	0.51	0.51	0.5	0.5	1,500,000
Reynolds Philippine Corp.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	70,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	13.25	13.25	12.5	12.75	495,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66	10,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.63	0.63	0.63	0.63	520,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.69	0.7	0.67	0.68	4,310,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.69	0.69	0.68	0.68	770,000
Grand Plaza Hotel Corp.	30	30	30	30	13,000
Manila Jockey Club	17.5	20	17.5	20	28,700
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	40,000
Philippine Racing Club	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	2,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	49	49	49	49	5,000
Ayala Corp. Pref.	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	2,000
DMCI Holdings, Inc- Pref.	500	500	500	500	150
Equitable PCI Bank-War	4.15	4.15	4	4	62,000
Jollibee Warrants	11.25	11.5	11.25	11.25	25,300
Omico Corp. Warrant	0.0032	0.0032	0.003	0.003	396,000,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series N	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series S	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.5	10.5	10.25	10.25	5,200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,900
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,500
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,200
Waterfront Phils.-Warrant	0.055	0.0625	0.055	0.0625	400,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	6.6	6.6	6.5	6.6	948,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.33	0.35	0.33	0.35	7,680,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	350,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.42	0.42	0.41	0.42	4,590,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	2.95	3	2.9	2.95	3,514,000
Keppel Phils. Prop. Inc.	1.48	1.52	0.8	1.28	390,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.44	0.45	0.44	0.45	130,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	2.16	2.16	2.16	2.16	18,000
SM Development Corp.	0.92	0.95	0.92	0.95	220,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.2	7.3	7.2	7.2	6,973,000
Universal Rightfield Prop	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.115	50,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	1,000,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc B	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	7,000,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	3	3	3	3	2,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	27,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.0065	0.007	0.0065	0.0065	429,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	495,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	1,890,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	1,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0048	0.005	0.0048	0.005	12,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	73,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	400,000
Pacifica	0.018	0.019	0.018	0.019	10,000,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	60,000

	SHARES	VALUE (P)
Banks & Fin Svc	811,620	92,135,325.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	586,220,800	172,403,560.00
PRO	24,863,000	72,967,130.00
Mining	960,892,000	5,594,600.00
OIL	96,460,000	750,600.00
GRAND TOTALS:	1,669,247,420	343,851,215.00

AVERAGES		
Banks & Fin Svc	604.06	DOWN 2.20
Comm'l & Ind'l	2,216.58	DOWN 11.08
PRO	645.89	UP 4.22
Mining	1,373.54	UP 3.26
OIL	1.93	UP 0.03
All Shares Index	776.99	UP 12.60
Composite	1,632.30	DOWN 3.74

NO. OF ADVANCES: 32; NO. OF DECLINES: 34; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 54; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 120; NO. OF TRADES: 2,122

DISCLOSURES

MANILA Mining Corp. will increase its authorized capital stock from P1.2 billion to P1.8 billion. Creditors of the company shall make subscriptions to the increase by converting their receivables to equity.

* * *

F&J Prince Holdings Corp. postponed its special stockholders' meeting originally scheduled on March 16.

* * *

MANILA Electric Co. announced the election of Social Security System administrator Vitaliano Nañagas II as director of the company to replace Carlos Arellano.

* * *

PHILIPPINE Savings Bank will have its annual stockholders' meeting on April 23 with record date set on March 12.

* * *

UNIOIL Resources & Holdings Co. Inc. denied having any information that may have caused the 40-percent drop in its share price.

* * *

BANCO Filipino Savings and Mortgage Bank set March 15 as the record date for the 20-percent stock dividend declared by the bank back in 1998.

* * *

SUBJECT to the approval of stockholders, **Macondray Plastics Inc.** will increase its authorized capital stock from P100 million to P400 million; declare a 155-percent stock dividend and repurchase up to P10 million of its own shares at prevailing market price. *Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research*

Japan minister joins appeals to ease credit

TOKYO—A day before the central bank meets to discuss monetary policy, Japanese Trade Minister Takeo Hiranuma yesterday joined a chorus of politicians to call for further easing to aid the fragile economic recovery.

With the economy still in tatters and supportive fiscal measures widely believed to be exhausted, pressure has been growing on the Bank of Japan to come up with more credit-loosening steps to help secure a self-sustained recovery.

Such pressure has been especially strong from lawmakers in the ruling coalition who want to repair their sinking popularity by boosting the economy ahead of an Upper House election in July.

"In order to put the Japanese economy on a stable recovery path, we need a monetary policy approach," Hiranuma, the minister of economy, trade and industry, told a news conference.

"The Bank of Japan should consider easing steps, including quantitative easing," he said, adding that the economy was still on a mild recovery trend but was leveling out.

In a quantitative easing, the central bank pumps up money supply by setting inflation or monetary targets or by buying huge volumes of Japanese government bonds.

Hiranuma's proposal was more specific than one last week when he merely called for the BOJ to take "appropriate and flexible" monetary steps.

However, analysts expect the BOJ's Policy Board to defy the politicians and leave key interest rates unchanged when it meets today. Speculation has been rampant that it will make a change at a March 19 meeting while trying to avoid a return to the 18-month experiment with zero interest rates that it ended last August. *Reuters*

Economists group sees no US recession, but risks growing

WASHINGTON—The US economy would avoid a recession this year but risks were growing as business activity downshifted sharply into a severe slowdown, an economists' group said Monday.

The National Association for Business Economics also forecast a drop in short-term interest rates, a smaller rise in consumer prices and a higher level of unemployment in 2001 compared with 2000.

"The business outlook has clearly deteriorated and NABE panelists see rising recession risks," NABE president Richard Berner said in a statement accompanying the group's outlook, which was based on surveys this month of 34 of its forecasters. It was the first of four surveys NABE would conduct this year.

"The good news in their view lies in more modest inflation pressure," said Berner, who is also chief US economist at Morgan Stanley Dean Witter. "The bad news is ongoing pressure on corporate profits."

The panel expected US economic growth to stay out of negative territory but fall to a 0.6-percent annual rate in the first quarter of the year and 1.9 percent in the second quarter before rebounding in the second half.

For all of 2001, NABE expects growth to slow to 2 percent from 5 percent in 2000, the strongest full-year pace in 16 years. In November, NABE forecast 2001 growth of 3.4 percent.

No recession

If the panel's forecast for 2001 comes true, the US economy will avoid a recession, which is commonly defined as two straight quarters of contraction.

But the latest outlook reflects a more dour short-term mood among forecasters, who say chances of a recession have risen to one-in-three from one-in-five in their November survey.

Within overall business activity for 2001, the panelists' biggest downward revisions were in their forecasts for consumer spending, business fixed investment and inventory building.

The outlook looked much better for 2002, the NABE panel said, predicting growth would recover to a healthy 3.5 percent.

The Federal Reserve's quick response to the slowdown—it knocked a full percentage point off short-term interest rates so far this year—was one reason NABE said its forecasters were convinced the country would avoid a recession.

They also said that if tax cuts were enacted as proposed by President George W. Bush, they would help the economy regain momentum later this year.

"It reflects confidence in economic policy," Berner told reporters at a news conference. "Both of those things are likely to prove stimulative."

Inflation to moderate

Inflation was expected to moderate, with the consumer price index rising only 2.6 percent on an average annual basis this year, slightly lower than the group's forecast in November and far below the actual rise of 3.4 percent in 2000, NABE said.

Although the NABE survey was taken before the government reported much higher-than-expected data for inflation at both the consumer and producer levels in January, Berner said the forecast would have changed only slightly if it had been compiled after the government reports were released. *Reuters*

Thai surplus seen intact despite deficit

BANGKOK—Thailand almost certainly posted its second monthly trade deficit in 40 months in January, but the country seemed set for another trade surplus for 2001, analysts said yesterday.

Analysts expect the Thai trade account to slip into a $350-million to 490-million deficit in January against a $413-million surplus in December.

The last time Thailand faced a trade deficit was in February 2000, when imports exceeded exports by $189 million.

Exports were Thailand's main engine of growth in 2000, when its gross domestic product expanded about 4.2 percent year-on-year.

Analysts attributed the weak January exports to seasonal factors, especially the Chinese lunar new year when many Asian markets closed for long holidays.

"It may well not be a coincidence," said Richard Henderson, a research director at Kim Eng Securities. "It would be logical to assume that Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan might have imported less in January."

About 46 percent of Thai exports go to Asian markets, including Japan.

Analysts think January exports fell 3.5 to 5 percent year-on-year to $5.1 billion to $5.2 billion, a low since May 2000 and against $5.75 billion in December.

They said January imports were estimated to have risen 30 to 35 percent year-on-year to around $5.5 billion against $5.3 billion in December.

Analyst Teerapat Thitamethakul at SCB Research Institute said January imports were inflated by a $160-million Boeing jet bought by state-owned Thai Airways International Plc.

He said despite the January trade deficit, Thailand should still manage to register a small $50-million current account surplus for the month against a $901-million surplus in December. *Reuters*

Australia seen weathering US slowdown

SYDNEY—Strong exports would help the Australian economy weather the current slow down but would not protect it from a major global slump, the central bank said yesterday.

Malcolm Edey, head of economic analysis at the Reserve Bank of Australia, repeated the central bank's recent message that the economy had slowed, but strong growth in exports had balanced the impact.

Edey said the gross value of exports and imports as a share of gross domestic product growth had increased to nearly 45 percent, compared to 25 percent in the early 1970s.

"Domestically, there is little sign of the sorts of imbalances that have curtailed growth in the past," he said, referring to moderate wage growth, steady inflation and strong business profits.

"On that basis, the Australian economy seems as well placed as could be hoped to weather a shift in international conditions, such as the one currently occurring," he said.

Australia's exports have been boosted by strong demand and the low value of the Australian dollar.

Edey said the country would be hit by a global recession.

"It would be difficult for Australia to remain unaffected in the event of a sharp slowdown in the global economy," he said. *AP*

Canada seen outpacing US

OTTAWA—Canada's economy slowed a notch in the final part of 2000, but figures to be released on Wednesday would show it still outperformed the United States and that its strength was far from depleted, analysts said.

"They will reflect a slowing coming from the US, but domestic demand will still provide some offset," said Paul Ferley, assistant chief economist at Bank of Montreal.

The United States also will release its revised GDP figures—with fourth-quarter growth seen at one percent—on Wednesday.

Canadian economists estimate fourth-quarter annualized GDP will be at 2.8 to 3.3 percent compared with 4.8 percent in 2000's third quarter.

December's gross domestic product is expected to rise 0.1 to 0.2 percent from November, when it increased 0.1 percent from October.

Economists foresee annual GDP at around 5 percent in 2000, in keeping with projections by the Bank of Canada.

"We're saying that we grew 3 percent in the same quarter that the US is likely to be revised down to about zero," said Robert Spector, senior Canadian economist and strategist at Merrill Lynch Canada. *Reuters*

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Microsoft denies stifling competition

WASHINGTON—In spirited and technologically savvy questioning, federal appeals judges challenged Microsoft to prove it didn't injure competitors—and challenged government lawyers to justify why the software giant should be split in two.

Monday's first day of Microsoft's high-stakes legal bid to reverse its court-ordered breakup for antitrust violations was dominated by pointed questions from the seven US Court of Appeals judges that kept lawyers leaping from subject to subject.

"Does antitrust law not contemplate that we protect nascent seedlings of competition?" Chief Judge Harry Edwards asked during one exchange about whether the company sought to snuff out Netscape's competing Internet browser.

"I think, clearly, the antitrust law protects them, but it doesn't protect them from competition," Microsoft attorney Richard Urowsky replied.

"It does protect them from predatory conduct," Edwards shot back, using the language the trial judge used when he ordered the company split in two last year.

Government lawyers got a similar grilling as to whether their action against Microsoft really would protect consumers if it would simply allow Netscape's product to dominate the market.

"Is that what we're really talking about?" Judge Raymond Randolph asked. "One monopolist replacing another? Are we fighting for the newest, latest monopoly status?"

"If we assume this is a competition for monopoly, the fact still remains that it's a form of competition," Minear said.

US District Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson, who made the historic ruling dividing Microsoft, found his findings of fact under intense scrutiny as well.

"There are some findings that are merely just conclusions and I find no basis for them," Edwards said at one point.

The justice department, 18 states and the District of Columbia have sued Microsoft in the biggest antitrust case since the breakup of telecommunications giant AT&T in 1984.

Arguments Monday centered on whether it was proper for Microsoft to bundle its popular Windows operating system with the Internet Explorer browser.

Urowsky argued that since Netscape's competing browser—which held an overwhelming market share before Microsoft offered its product for free—could be downloaded, consumers were free to decide which they wanted.

George Washington University law professor William Kovacic, who has tracked the case and spoke to reporters outside the courthouse, said the weight the appellate judges ultimately give to Jackson's findings was pivotal.

"It will be interesting to see to what extent do the judges have to throw out the judge's findings in order for Microsoft to prevail," Kovacic said. *AP*

EU to probe Honeywell, GE merger

FAIRFIELD, Connecticut—The European Commission has decided to launch an in-depth probe of General Electric's proposed $45-billion buyout of Honeywell International Inc., pushing back a decision on whether to clear the deal by up to four months.

While disappointed by the delay, GE said Monday it remained confident its acquisition of Honeywell would eventually be approved.

"We continue to believe that our businesses are complementary with no meaningful overlaps," GE said in a statement on Monday announcing the European Union's decision. "However, the commission has expressed concerns about the broad range of aviation product offerings."

GE chair Jack Welch, who met with the European Union's antitrust chief, Mario Monti, in Brussels on Monday, originally expected the deal to meet all regulatory obligations by April at the latest. It seems that timetable is now unrealistic.

"The commission wants more time to study the issue and we understand this could last up to four months," GE said.

The commission had been due to make a decision on the GE-Honeywell deal March 6.

Under the EU antitrust clearance system, companies are subject to a one-month probe after which the Commission can either clear the merger, with or without conditions, or open an additional four-month probe.

The company was expected to submit concessions to the Commission Tuesday in an effort to overcome any doubts raised by the EU's regulators.

The deal is also being reviewed by US authorities. *AP*

Australia beef exports to rise

CANBERRA—The Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics has forecast that the value of Australia's exports of beef and veal will rise to A$3.7 billion in 2001-02 from a revised A$3.5 billion this year.

Projections released at the Australian government's commodities analyst unit Outlook 2001 conference for the coming financial year were based on buoyant demand and lower global short-term supply, ABARE said.

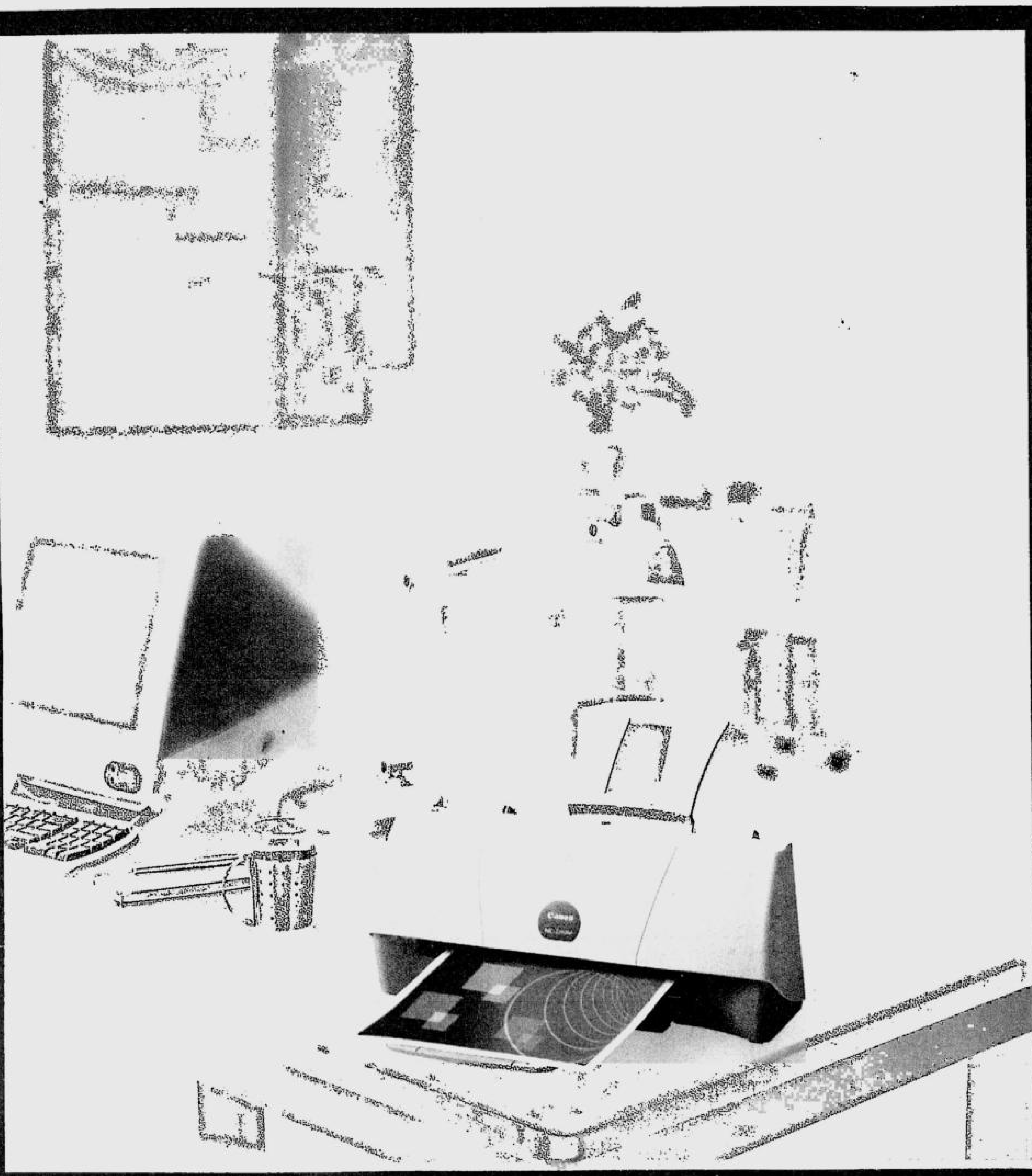
However, medium-term beef cattle prices were expected to fall as US beef production and exports rose.

ABARE forecast that Australian beef exports to the United States would rise to 351,000 tons in 2001-02 from 343,000 tons in the current year, with herd rebuilding expected in 2001-02 limiting domestic production.

Japan, traditionally Australia's largest export market, was forecast to import 320,000 tons of Australian beef in 2001/02, almost steady with 319,000 tons this year. Korea was forecast to take 75,000 tons of Australian beef in 2001/02, slightly ahead of this year.

Australia's cattle slaughter in 2001/02 was forecast to rise for the first time in three years as producers took advantage of higher prices and two years of herd rebuilding came to an end.

This was expected to boost production by 3 percent to over slightly two million tons. *Reuters*



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HK exporters cautious on expansion plans

HONG KONG—Hong Kong exporters, one of the key growth engines of the economy, are likely to turn more cautious on expansion plans as global trade slows, according to the chair of the Hong Kong Exporters' Association.

"In the next 12 to 16 months, exporters may have to hold back if they have aggressive expansion plans as the US economy slows," Jeffrey Lam told Reuters at his office in one of the territory's main industrial zones.

"We are taking a cautious stand though it should not have a tremendous impact on the employment side," said Lam, who is also managing director of private toy manufacturer Forward Winsome Industries Ltd., which employs around 20,000 people.

Hong Kong exports of goods and services were key drivers behind the territory's double-digit economic growth last year, aiding its gradual recovery from one of the worst recessions in decades.

However, unemployment and domestic consumption still have a way to go before they revisit levels seen before the onset of Asia's 1997-98 financial crisis.

Lam said he expected Hong Kong's export growth rate to slow to between 3 and 5 percent this year compared to year-on-year growth of 19 percent in the first nine months of 2000.

The projected growth rate was reasonable given that exports had increased by double-digit levels for much of 2000, he said, adding that growth of 5 to 8 percent would represent a "very good" figure.

Total Hong Kong exports fell in January year-on-year for the first time since June 1999, the government said Monday.

But analysts said it was difficult to determine how much of the decline was due to weaker world trade and how much was attributable to the timing of the Lunar New Year, when business usually slows. Last year, the holiday fell in February.

The value of total exports in January eased 0.4 percent year-on-year to HK$121.4 billion ($15.6 billion). The value of domestic exports fell 16.1 percent year-on-year to HK$12.7 billion, though re-exports rose 1.8 percent to HK$108.7 billion. The value of imports fell a higher-than-expected 4 percent.

China's pending WTO entry will cushion the pain of slowing global demand as more foreign companies use Hong Kong export firms to source mainland merchandise, Lam said.

Chinese Foreign Trade Minister Shi Guangsheng was quoted on Monday as saying entry was likely in October or November. However, the next head of the world trade body, Supachai Panitchpakdi, said late in the day that China remained on track to enter the WTO in the first half of 2001.

"Hong Kong will still undoubtedly play the middleman role especially for smaller foreign companies who do not have the resources to deal with China directly. This will remain the gateway into China for years to come," he said. *Reuters*

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US, EU compromise on WTO sought

WASHINGTON—In a move aimed at jump-starting efforts to launch a new round of world trade talks, Canada has urged the United States and the European Union to compromise on their proposed agendas for the negotiations.

Speaking to reporters after a meeting with US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick, Canadian International Trade Minister Pierre Pettigrew said he urged the United States to support a larger agenda than it had proposed so far.

Pettigrew said he had also urged the European Union to accept a narrower agenda than it pursued 15 months ago, when the last World Trade Organization ministerial meeting in Seattle ended in failure.

The disagreement between the United States and the European Union over which trade areas should be included in a new round of world trade talks was one reason the Seattle meeting failed.

The United States opposed the European Union's proposal for talks on competition and investment policies, saying expanding the talks to those areas would make it too difficult for countries to reach an overall agreement within the goal of three years.

US negotiators also resisted efforts by Japan and developing countries to include anti-dumping rules in the negotiations.

With another ministerial meeting set for November in Qatar, WTO Director General Mike Moore has also urged member countries to identify remaining problem areas by the end of July.

Canada supports a "Quad meeting" between Canada, the United States, the European Union and Japan to help set an agenda, Pettigrew said. But he said Quad countries must take care not to alienate developing countries.

"I do believe we have to make more room for the developing countries in the World Trade Organization, in the world trade system. We need a lot more than the Quad to move on," he said.

Zoellick showed "some openness" to a Quad meeting but did not want to send a signal that developed countries thought they could resolve issues related to the WTO agenda by themselves, Pettigrew said.

Differences between developed and developing countries over the WTO agenda were also a major reason the Seattle meeting failed. Many developing countries asked for more time to implement previous trade commitments.

Pettigrew, who chaired discussions on implementation issues at the Seattle meeting, said the developing countries had many legitimate points. *Reuters*

China says trade liberalization will be gradual

BEIJING—China's chief negotiator for accession to the World Trade Organization said yesterday the opening of China's market would be "gradual and conditional."

Long Yongtu said opening China's market to foreign companies must be in proportion to China's development in "speed and width." But once China joined the WTO, it would abide by international rules, the official Xinhua news agency said.

The comments came after China's Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation Shi Guangsheng rejected reports that the country would enter the WTO before the northern hemisphere summer.

The China Business Times on Monday cited him as saying that even if the country's negotiations on WTO entry went smoothly, the country still needed to draft and introduce the required laws.

Consequently, it would be impossible for the country to enter the WTO in the first half of this year, the paper added.

Long also said China hoped other countries would abide by prevailing international rules in dealing with China instead of using a double standard.

He was speaking at a luncheon sponsored by the preparatory committee of the Bono Forum for Asia, which China was formally launching in the hope of boosting economic cooperation among Asian countries.

Last week, EU Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy said China's accession to the WTO was likely to go ahead this summer.

China's accession had been expected late last year or early in 2001 after it struck deals with key trading partners the United States and the EU on liberalization of Chinese markets.

However, Washington wants further assurances from Beijing that it will scale down government support for agriculture, while the EU wants to ensure liberalization of access for services, such as telecommunications, banking and insurance. *AFP*

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Caloocan 305m² Hse & Warehse 6.5M • 928-3267

MAKATI

4Sty Bldg. Dian St., Mkti P15M Neg • 658-2410

Along Evangelista Makati 4Stry Bldg. w/Penthouse & Mezannine 311m² 45M 8441326

MANDALUYONG

**5Sty Bldg Along EDSA-Mand LA889m² Comm'l 643-5313

LOT Area 509m² w/ Office & Whouse Parking lot For 5Vans Call 531-1151

PASAY

Antel Seaview Roxas 1BR / Studio • 928-3267

PASIG

Pasig Semi-Comm'l 240m² Near Ortigas 658-2410

Pasig Semi-Comm'l 240m² Lot 4 Sale • 658-2410

QUEZON CITY

Bohol Ave QC 200m² 3Sty Brand new 9M • 928-3267

Comm/Res H&L Horseshoe 515sqm Call 412-1652 Jen

Comm/Res Thse Sct Area 4BR P2.5M Call 412-1652

Cordillera SMH 700m² with 3Sty Bldg P21M 928-3267

E.Rodriguez QC 2115m² w/ 4Sty Bldg P80M 928-3267

**Near Retiro Banawe QC 7M Nice 9283267

**Nr Morato 7-Units Apt 690m² 25T/m² 9283267

Palanan Near Banawe QC 267m² 7.5M • 928-3267

Pitimini w/Hse 2sty 260m² 5.5M 928-3267 • 920-2001

SFDM, QC 280m²-714m² Res/Whse • 928-3267

D. Tuazon nr Malaya 800m² w/hse 928-3267 • 9202001

Villa Paramita 4 Units 59 Sct. Borromeo 928-3267

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

COMML/RESDL

OTHER AREAS

Canumay Barrio Bagbagin 1876/m² w/Whse 928-3267

RIZAL

Antipolo Marcos Hiway 1.6HA P1300/m² 658-2410

Taytay Near Tikling 1.7M 658-2410

SAN JUAN

San Juan P. Guevarra 300 P10M • Tel. # 723-2391

HOUSE & LOT

ALABANG

House & Lot Alabang Hills LA475 3BR+Den 533-5525

LAS PINAS

• BF Resort Bnew 2sty 4BR 3TB Ter 2.9M • 872-6951

• BF Resort Bnew 2sty 4BR 4TB Ter 2.6M • 872-6951

**Bn DPlex BFalmza Nr Fr FA208 3Br Mds 2.7M 8253244

Auburn Place 2.2M 2stys 3br 2tb new Term 874-7234

BF Res Bnew 4BR 3TB 30% DP Bal 10yrs 3.8M 8726951

BFR Bnew 2sty 4BR 4TB 2.6M Terrace 872-6951

Bnew 3BR 2TB 2.5M 30% DP Bal Terms • 872-6951

Manuela 4A 192 @5700/m² Neg. • Tel.# 874-7234

Manuela 4A 2M 4br 2tb Tel LA192 FA120 • 874-7234

MOONWALK VILLAGE LA181m² 3BR Bungalow P1.5M Vic/Gigie 8903461 loc. 27/25

MAKATI

**2Bdrm 170m² Salcedo FF 7766018 / 09178622577

**Dasmarinas Vill Mkti 960m² P22M Only Rush 7532532

HL Bel-Air2 with Income LA500 P30M • 911-7940

Magallanes 12M LA405m² 2Sty 4B Den Nice 534-7949

Magallanes Subd. Makati H&L LA367 3BR 643-5313

MANDALUYONG

Mandaluyong LA360 FA400 2Sty 4B 5TB 3CG 534-7949

MARIKINA

Grnind bnew 3br 2M 9487112

Industrial Valley Mkna 5BR P4.5M (Neg.) • 681-9868

**Industrial Valley Mkna 5br P4.5M Jun 6819868

MUNTINLUPA

Sto. Nino Vill 149m² 3Bdrm P1.3M Vic 8903461 loc 27

PARANAQUE

BF-Pque B. New Hses In-Hse Fin. 655-8371 0919-4037225

HL Multinational LA580 FA512m² P5.6M •911-7940

PASIG

4BR Nice Valle Verde New w/Pool • 1277-37052

GREEN PARK SUBD. 225m² w/7Bdrm & 3TB FA264m² P4.5M Vic 8903461 loc 27/25

Pasig City H&L A-250m² P2.5M • 534-6610

Psg Bo Kapitolyo H&L New 5BTB 24hrs H'O 643-5313

Valle Verde '4BR w/Pool Nice New • 635-6722

Valle Verde H&L 4 Sale P16M • 658-2410

QUEZON CITY

Nr SM Fview 260m² 4140418

411m² D. Tuazon St., QC Te.# 928-1469

600m² 5stry Bldg. & Whse Samat St. SMH QC 9281469

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

HOUSE & LOT

OTHER AREAS

CASIMIRO TOWNHOMES
Habay, Bacoor, Cavite
near SM Bacoor
Initial DP: P15,000

WESTVILLE HOMES
Ligas, Bacoor, Cavite
Initial DP: P15,000
FORTE REALTY
2/F Princess Bldg. Esteban St, Legaspi Village, Makati City
810-7183 810-8019
815-2144 873-0787
810-7297 872-7603
871-8318
Welcome Brokers & Agents

QUEZON CITY

Nr Ateneo SD 197FA 160LA 3BR 1MR Terms 645-3731

**Ayala Heights QC Houses P16m-P19M Call 9333714

Cubao P. Tuazon LA1000m² 4BR 3TB 5CG • 928-2497

**Greenmeadows 30T/sqm. Facing East 658-2410

House & Lot QBezon City LA200-300 3BR • 533-5525

Loyola Grand Villas New LA600 2sty 17M 534-7949

LOYOLA GRAND VILLAS 4BR/6T& B FA460 LA401 435-2346/0917-7062620

Mayon St SMH QC A-960m² 534-6610 • 818-8569 Jojo

Mira Nila QC 354FA 5br 5t&b 3stry 150LA 6.9M 928-9714 / 927-9609

WHITE PLAINS 4BR P16M 412-1825 / 150-341394

New Mla FA325m² 12.5M 3sty 5br 2cg New 413-4411

Nr. Ateneo 1Sty SD 4.4M 160LA 100FA BN 645-3731

Nr Ateneo FA348 LA206 4BR 3TB 8M 2CG 645-3731

Nr. Ateneo TH4M SA6M SD 10M up lot 200 sm 6453731

Proj 7 Anahaw nr SM 3M 2sty 3BR 2CG 413-4411

R.Sale N.Olympus4173705

Timog Q.C. LA493sqm 3BR 3TB 5CG • 928-2497

Timog QC LA993sqm with Old House • 928-2497

E. Abada/Ateneo P24T/m² 1,500 10BR • 721-5226

OTHER AREAS

CanyonWoods Btngas 7.5M ownerlvngSF0917-8143792

•LAGUNA BEL-AIR 3• LA120m² up 2-3BR w/prkg Joann 912-5775

Along Brgy DITA Sta. Rosa Road LA177m² 2sty 3BR 2TB Vic 8903461 loc. 27

Upper Bicutan 195m² 4BR P1.25M Vic 8903461 loc.27

VALENZUELA 744m² 2929580 Danny

RIZAL

**Brookeside Cainta 2Houses 8.5M LA1169 H2² & Tel 6435313

Cainta Rizal nr. Hiway LA: 426m² Mrs. Reyes 6554556

H&L For Sale Beverly Hills Antipolo City • 655-4556

Montevista Heights Taytay Rizal LA140sqm 655-4556

Valley View 192m² H&L P1.2M • 658-2410

Valley View H&L 4 Sale P1.5M • Tel.# 658-2410

SAN JUAN

Ghills SEV H&L 4 Sale P20M; 35M; 50M&Up 7232391

Greenhills H&L Nice 5BR LA780m² • 658-2410

Greenhills N. 1000 cor 6BR Den SPool P89M 723-2391

Nr. Aurora Blvd/N.Domingo P9M LA233 4br DBO 7215226

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

HOUSE & LOT

SAN JUAN

GREENHILLS WEST Res/Comm Bet. Xavier & ICA 728sqm 2Sty. Mansion 6Br/7Tb w/Maids Rm. Drivers Rm. 6Cg. 722-1832 / 636-7942

**Nr LaSalle 2BR Prkg 3M Furnished 71m² 532-1651

PROVINCIAL

**Royale Tagaytay H&L 10M LA622 4tb cor. Lot 6435313

Baguio House & Lot Good Location • Tel.# 531-3742

HL LA371 FA279m² 5BR/TB Mds Rm P6.7 • 911-7940

LAGUNA BEL AIR 3 LA120m² -250m² 2-3BR w/Maids Room Free Daily Tripping Luis Call 834-2296 / 0917-8113239

VARIOUS AREAS

RUSH SALE! Lots/Hse & Lots & Condo Unit QC, Pque Pasig, Antipolo, Cebu, Mrikina, Cubao Call Jorge 995-5718; Ricky 995-5545; Iona 995-5150; & Imle 995-5129

LOT

KALOOCAN

5,000m² Deparo Caloocan City • Tel.# 928-1469

LAS PINAS

BF Res 280 320 349 379 417 448 • Tel.# 872-6951

BF Resort 169m² 176m² 180m² 6500/m² • 874-7234

•BF Resort 349 5.5T; 379 6T; 192 7T • 872-6951

CITADELA LAS PINAS 240sqm • Tel. # 928-2497

MANILA

Binondo Vacant Lot 155m² nr. Madrid M Santos 4134411

Malate Vacant 160m² 3.6M nr VCruz La Salle 4134411

Pipin St. near Espana Mla. Area 150m² 1.5M 5346610 Jo

MANDALUYONG

Boni Mandaluyong LA445 Nr McDO, 7-11, Jolibe 534-7949

Mandaluyong LA3680 w/BG @15T/m² Only • 534-7949

MUNTINLUPA

**Nice Loc M Sun 880m² @18,500/m² Neg 8253244

Camella Homes III Muntl LA383sqm • 928-2497

PLEASANT VILL w/direct access rd to FILINVEST Alabang 477m² P5,500/m² VIC/GIGI 8903461 loc 27

PARANAQUE

** BF-Pque Lots 280-350m² In-House Financing 655-8371 Cell. 0919-4037225

BF Homes Prque 300sqm P7,000/sqm • 928-2497

Gatchalian Subd. P4 Pque Only Vac. nr Church 5347949

Multi-National P'que LA600 V/L Jun • 681-9868

Sucat V/L 724m² w/old Hse @ Rear 22M neg 643-5313

PASIG

**Valle Verde 6 720sqm 6558371 / 0919-4037225

400m² Prime Lot P4,000/m² Bside Subd Cainta 7479220

**Comml LOT Sixto Ave Cor 962m² 141-259275

Greenwoods Exec Village Pasig Sout/Park 534-7949

Near Marcos H-way 200m² 9500/m² Neg. • 645-3731

Origas Center infront Tektite 5090m² 928-3267

Pasig City Gud 4 Thouse 10400m² Gud Buy 658-2410

QUEZON CITY

** SFDM QC519sqm 6558371 /0919-4037225

15th Ave. 500m² 25T neg. Facing East • 645-3731

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

LOT

QUEZON CITY

15th Avenue Comm'l. Lot. 400m² 22T/m² • 645-3731

3,300m² Along EDSA, QC Te.# 928-1469

A BONIFACIO 2H 20T/m² Cash/Terms • 645-3731

Arcadia Subd. Bside Cort Garde 30T/m² • 658-2410

CAPITOL DIST. 600m² 3800/m² • Tel.# 645-3731

Comm'l Sct. Area 800m² 35T/m² • 645-3731

Cubao nr Santolan com'l 500m² 18T neg. • 645-3731

Fairview 150m² 4T/m² Sta. Lucia Prop Nice 645-3731

Greenmeadows Lot 4 Salo P30T/m² • 658-2410

Loyola Grand Villas 209m² P14T/m² • 657-8185

Mayon St. SMH P30M Area 960m² 216ts 534-6610 Jojo

Near BALARA½HA Expan. Nice Area • 645-3731

Neopolitan Ph6 P4500/sqm 300/sqmFenced 6714421

North View Capitol Hill LA180m² P5T/m² 928-2497

Nr Ateneo 600m² 7,000/m² 225m² P12T/m² • 645-3731

Nr Mindanao Ave. 335m² 3720888;3720825;3720869

Nr New York 400m² 20T Neg. No Flood 645-3731

Proj. 2 203m² V/Lot 3.5M 928-3267.• 920-2001

PROJ. 7 COR. LOT 300m² 14T/m² Neg • 645-3731

Roxas Dist.200m² 18T/m² V/Lot 928-3267 • 920-001

**Scout Cor LOT w/ Fence 800m² 231/m² 9283267

Serrano Laktaw (cor. Lot) QC 300m² 13T/m² 928-3267

Nr SM Fview 100m² P5600 Cash/ Term 3720888/25/69

Sta. Mesa Hts. Lot 240m² near Mayon Suki 4134411

Tchers Vill QC LA290m² P14T/m² • 928-2497

TIERRA PURA Q.C. 300m² P8T/m² • 928-3267

Tierra Verde Tandang Sora 400m² P8T/m² Vacant 5324333

West Tri. 434 P10.8M Old House DBO 721-5226

RIZAL

**Imelda Ave Cainta 464sqm 6558371 / 0919-4037225

NR. STA. LUCIA 4.5T SQ 242-1521

246m² 3.9T/m² VISTA VERDE Cainta 6467425

**Along Marcos Baras Rizal LA1.8Has Jun 6819268

Cainta 100meter frntg. Ort. Ave. P2500/m² 658-2410

**Farm Lot Baras Rizal Along Marcos Jun 6819268

Gloria Heights 400m² P4T/m² Antipolo Vacant 532-4333

Our Lady of Lourdes 96m² 2500/m² • 645-3731

Saint Anthony Subd. Lot 300m² Gud Buy • 658-2410

Sumulong Hway 600m² 15m Front. P6T/sqm 532-4333

Taytay 1H Along H-way Nice 3.3T/m² 645-3731

Taytay Nr. Comml Ctr Res Lots 58-112m² 2T/m² 6558371

Valley View Overlooking 120 & 240 • 658-2410

Various Lots Nice Subd. P5T+/m² Terms • 911-7940

Village East Binangonan 203sqm corner T531-3742

VL3000m² @P18T/m² Very Comm'l Ortigas • 911-7940

SAN JUAN

N. Domingo 300m² no flood 20T/m² • 645-3731

Near N. DOMINGO 400m² P14T/m² Neg. • 645-3731

San Juan Lit Baguio 450m² Good 4 Wrhse • 723-2391

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

LOT

SAN JUAN

SJuan Lit Baguio 650m² P25T/m² • 723-2391

PROVINCIAL

1030m² Bacaue, Bulacan Piggery • 928-1469

1,600m² Overlooking Tagaytay • Tel.# 928-1469

1-Hoc Back John Hay JV Or Sale 2T/sqm DB Only 7162904 / 09197312344 FJ

Baguio Lot 236 & 278sqm Good Location • 531-3742

Baguio Subdivision Lot w/Pine Trees • T531-3742

Bat. 4.6HA 600/m² 1Km fr. Calabarzon Hway 645-3731

CAVITE LIGHT INDUSTRIAL PARK Along Maguyam Rd, Carmona Cavite Pre-Selling Tel 635-8108 / 636-0111

Colbella Homes Tanauan Batangas 3Lots T531-3742

Fort Magsaysay N.E. 18Has Resd'l P450/m² T531-3742

Grand Victoria, Nueva Ecija 4 Lots • Tel.# 531-3742

**Holiday Hills Sn. Pedro Lag. LA650 Jun 6819268

LAGUNA LOTS 4.2HA and 1.5 HA • Tel.# 928-2497

Malolos Bulacan nr. Sta. Rita Exit 3.8Hec 9283267

Puerto Princesa good 4 fstfood bank 0917-3711210

Resd'l/Comm'l Lot 551m² P3.5M Meycauyan 9117940

Sherwood Cavite 345m² Block 11 Lot 3 • 723-2391

Tagaytay 2Adj Lots 780 & 805m² • 723-2391

Tagaytay Country Homes I 135m² 3200/m² 928-3267

Villa Segovia E Kingdom 296sqm 2Lots • 531-3742

Villa Segovia Sta. Rosa 2 Corner Lots • T531-3742

OTHER AREAS

7049m² Malinta Valenzuela Tel.# 928-1469

Comm'l Lot 2300m² @ 16T/m² Malinta • 911-7940

Comm'l Lot 600m² Along Hway Malanday • 911-7940

Ibuna nr P.Guevarra 231m² 20T/m² w/Fence 928-3267

TOWN&COUNTRY S.VILLE 209m² P800T Vic 8903461 L27

Sta. Mesa Heights 480m² 210m² 18-20T/m² 928-3267

CONDO/TWNHSE/APT

KALOOCAN

**Caloocan GF 360m² 2Sty Use 3Sty Whse 9283267

MAKATI

1BR Fully Furnished P3.5M Salcedo Vill. • 911-7940

2B Salcedo FA72m² P3.9M Tel.# 534-7949

Millenium Mkt Ave P2.9M 1B FA55m² • 534-7949

nr GREENBELT b new 1-3br 4121825/ 09177914366

•88 Corp. Ctr BNew 178m² Sale or Rent 412-1825

•Rush! Le Domain 2BR 6M •90m² 4121825/ 150341394

nr GREENBELT 3br 250m² 25M 4121825 09177914366

Westgate Salcedo 1B 1CG FF FA60m² P1.5M 5347949

MANILA

NrlaSalle 3sty3BR T899-2148

Sta. Ana TH 3BR 3TB 2ps P5.9 & 6.8M • 911-7940

MANDALUYONG

Condo New Unit 1-2BR's Mandaluyong • 533-5525

Various Mandaluyong Townhouses 534-6610 Jojo

Various Wack-Wack Condo Lee Gardens 5346610 Jojo

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

CONDO/TWNHSE/APT

MANDALUYONG

Wack² Tower 28 3TB Mds Rm 1ps P5.5M • 911-7940

MARIKINA

Nr. Ateneo TH Cinco Mkna Bnew 4BR FA350 681-9868

MARIKINA HTS 2BR w/provision for attic & 2nd T&B, all concrete P900T only 921-5033 / 913-1737

PASAY

Pasay-1BR Condo; Ready 0917-4664762/752-6402

PASIG

11M Beautiful HSE South Bay Paranaque 141-259275

6.5M Townhse Kawilihan Vill Pasig 141-259275

CONDO UNIT 123BR's Ortigas Ctr Tel.#533-5525

SACRIFICE SALE 5.2M 3BR Phoenix Hts Condo4121825

Nr C5 FA62m² 3BR 2TB 1.7M 0%int 5yrs 645-3731

Nr C5 Res/Com TH 6M 3St FA156 0%int 5yrs 645-3731

**OFF Condo Prestige Twr Emerald 4M 141-259275

Pasig 3M BN 140FA 89LA 4BR 3TB Nice • 645-3731

Renaissance 3BR 199m²@ 8.9M 223m² @9.5M 681-2457

QUEZON CITY

Cubao CondoP1.3M EZterm 9126976/9132224/4381480

Cubao 17door Apt Fully Conc Fin. 13M 645-3731

Nr G'hill 2BR 2TB 87m² BN RFO Nice Loc • 645-3731

Cubao 14th Avenue Apt. 460/m² • 658-2410

Bnew Gilmore / N. Domingo P3.6M 90m² 2br DBO 721-5226

Loyola Country Club Mansion/Thse Avail 6578185

Loyola Grand Mansion LA180 FA200 616M 657-8185

Mapayapa Vill Thse P2.2M Terms Call 412-1652 Jen

New Mla 172m² Bnew 6M 2Sty 3BR w/2CG 413-4411

Nr Ateneo FA149m² LA72 4M 3BR 2BT • 645-3731

Nr EDSA Dplex 3BR LA80 FA80 BN nice loc • 645-3731

Nr EDSA FA64 LA50 2TB BN nice loc 2.7M 645-3731

Nr West Ave F230m² 4.2M 3BR 4TB 2CG New 4134411

Panay Thse QC Newly Ren. 3Sty 5BR P5M • 928-3267

RENT TO OWN 4BR/3TB P3.5M Cubao Bank Loan also Available Call now 421-0423

Scout Area 3BR 3TB 2CG MR w/TB 5.5M • 928-2497

**Scout Townhse 115m² LOT 280m² 3Sty 5M Nice 9283267

Sta Mesa Hts 120m² 4.5M 3Sty 4BR w/2CG 413-4411

Teachers Vill QC 3BR 2TB 1CG P2.5M • 928-2497

Teresa Hts Bung 240m² 4br nr SM Fview 3.5M 9283267

TH LA85m² FA165m² 3BR 3TB P3.3M F'view 9117940

TH LA91m² FA70m² 3BR 2TB @ P2.8M • 911-7940

RIZAL

VILLA OLYMPIA THSE Cainta, Rizal • 657-8185

SAN JUAN

South Admiral 490 sqm Rush! • Pager 1277-37052

Annapolis GH Condo 3BR 170m² Nice MdsRm 9283267

**Annapolis Greenhills Condo 2-3Br 7-8M 9283267

Eisenhower Comm'l Unit 53.80sqm • T531-3742

Francis Court San Juan LA200 FA269 • 928-2497

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

CONDO/TWNHSE/APT

SAN JUAN

G'hills Condo 3BR P5.5M w/Huge Balcony •723-2391

G'hills Ofc Condo 70m² w/ Pkrg FFur P3.2M 723-2391

Ghills 3BR FFurn FA138 Bful View P5.5M 7232391

Greenhill Condo 1BR FA70 P3M • 723-2391

Greenhills Anapolis Condo 3BR P9-11M • 723-2391

Greenhills Eisenhower St. 3br Condo P6-8M 723-2391

Greenhills Ofc Condo 70m² w/Prkg P31M • 723-2391

Greenhills Thse 3BR FA180• 2CarGrg • 723-2391 P6.8M

SAN JUAN CONDO 3BR 137 P4M • 723-2391

Eisenhower Twr 53.8sqm Furnished • 531-3742

Wack² Twin 2BR FA145 Facing Golf Crse 723-2391

PROVINCIAL

TH nr Marcos Hway Baguio FA108 71.7M • 911-7940

OTHER AREAS

**1-3BR Condo Units Avail Call 894-4879 / 7526402

**Sct Madrinan Twnhse 7.4M 3Stry 2Pkg 230m² 5221651

VARIOUS AREAS

Various Condo Ortigas, Pasig, Manda. 5346610 Jojo

MEMORIAL LOT

1Lot LMP Mkna 645-5119

2Lots MMP-Dasma 8231320

Heritage Park Main Road Lawn @ P97T • 534-7949

RESORT

Fairways & Bluewater w/ Certificate C1 • 534-7949

CLUB SHARE & MEMBERSHIP

Fairways & Bluewater w/ Certificate C1 • 534-7949

FONTANA SHARES 200T 928-3267 • 714-2867

FACTORY/WHSE

**Alab-Muntl LA3000m² w/Whse FA2200m² Suc. Rd 643-5313

FARM/FISHPEN

FARM LOT 1.8 Has Baras Rizal along Hway 681-9868

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

APARTMENT

KALOOCAN

3620065 BRIONES 7AVE 2T8;5/T

MAKATI

2Br 2Sty Bancal P8500 8176115

Mkt. Apt. 4 rent T8954370

Office/Res 140sqm 6069 Palma Back of Rockwell

MANILA

1BR 1TB P6T @732-3957

Studio nr DLSU 58T 5220956

Nr. LaSalle Taft T-8992148

PASAY

NEAR HP 5,500 1BR 5369502

OTHER AREAS

APT. 4 Rent Tel 561-2412

HOUSE

MAKATI

2005 Kalachuchi Dasma V. 3BR WDen & Pool 8176115

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

FOR RENT

PRIME OFFICE-WAREHOUSE/FACTORY SITE AT 2296 PASONG TAMO EXT. PREVIOUSLY OCCUPIED BY IONICS PHILS., CONSISTING OF 2-STY OFFICE BLDG. & WAREHOUSE/FACTORY AT REAR.

FOR PARTICULARS - CALL **LINDA**
Tel Nos.: **8185614** (Direct line); or **8140884** to **89**

HOUSE

MAKATI

2Sty 2BR 2Toilet Garage Reasonble 0917- 3225473

PASIG

VV Split Level Furnished Call 727-5056

QUEZON CITY

1BR nr Ktpnan 8T 6819727

3BR DUPLEX HSE 10A Sikatuna Vil QC ALAN 8184277

Ldies nr UP Dillman 5243126

Proj4 2br2lb P6T 911-9390

PROVINCIAL

Angeles City Nr Clark 572m² w/Bung. P9T/mo 532-9257

CONDO/TWNHSE

MAKATI

**Amorsolo East Rockwell 1Br Pkg FF 50T 8253244

**Le Metroploe Salcedo 3br 2pkg 175m² FF 80T 8253244

MKT. OFF. CONDO P. TAMO 8T to 15T/mo. 8953847/8953846

STUDIO 14K Neg. 637-7583

PARANAQUE

2BDRM 2T&B BF HOMES PQUE TEL. 8071245 12T/M

PASAY

Antel Seaview Roxas 1BR Studio 13-15T/mo 926-3267

PASIG

**Phoenix Hgt Nr VVerde 1Br 75m² Pkg 30T 8253244

Alexandra 3BR@P55T/mo FF Ren 3BR UF P40T 681-2457

Valle Verde Thse 3BR 2Prkg Pool P25T/mo up 681-2457

VVerde6 FA250 3BR Attic P40T/mo • 723-2391

QUEZON CITY

P5,500/mo.CUBAO
P6,500/mo.Malate
Call 911-3361 / 522-6648

SAN JUAN

2-3BR Ghills Furn Condo P25T • Pager 1277-37052

Eisenhower Comm'l Unit 53.80sqm • T531-3742

Greenhills SEV Studio 3BR P18-40T • 723-2391

VARIOUS AREAS

CONDO MAKATI/ORTIGAS 2-3BR's • Tel.# 533-5525

FOR LEASE

BNEW COMML/RES/OFF 3F NR TERMINAL3 PASAY 8315945

Comm'l/Office/Residential TEL. 8071245 BF Paranaque

LOT 4 LEASE
1)Salvia St cor Q-Hiway Frt Robinson Bside Seaoil
2)Visayas Avenue Bside Planters Bank Call 3743637;3743175;3744265

Mindanao Avenue
1,400m² Lot with 400m² warehouse with Office
9291863 / 09175255919

ROOM & BOARD

Cubao Strong H2O; P850 9124106

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NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is given on the lost of CGCC Stock Certificate No. 0015 in the name of Michael R. Yniquez. If no contest received new certificate will be issued.
PDI--Feb. 21,28 Mar 7,2001

Notice is hereby given of the loss of Dangerous Drugs License Card No. 17637N99 of Dr. Erlinda Florentino Tel. 7329695

Notice is hereby given that Stock Certificate No. 419 comprising 41,833 shares of the Philippine Daily Inquirer issued in the name of Excel Equities, Inc. has been declared lost and the same is hereby cancelled.
(PDI- Feb. 14, 21 & 28, 2001)

Notice of Loss
This is to inform to the public that shares of stocks at Far East Univ. registered in the name of Reynaldo S. Navarro was lost sent by mail specified as follows:

1 Cert#24838 1 Share
2 Cert#23087 1 Share
3 Cert#21839 2 Shares
4 Cert#10505 5 Shares

PDI--Feb. 21, 28 March 7, 2001

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Finance

MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT FUND OFFICE
CBRMP
COMMUNITY-BASED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROJECT

The Community-Based Resource Management Project (CBRMP) of the Department of Finance is inviting interested applicants to fill in the following vacant positions:

(1) FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST

QUALIFICATIONS:

1. Must be a CPA or Accounting graduate preferably with masteral degree
2. Must have extensive experience (3-5 years) in Finance/Accounting/Auditing Budget Management functions
3. Must have at least 3-5 years experience in World Bank assisted projects, working with LGUs and oversight agencies (DBM, NEDA, DOF)
4. Must have extensive experience in government accounting and auditing procedures
5. Hardworking, well-motivated, with good leadership qualities/potentials
6. Excellent interpersonal skills
7. Must be willing to travel in Regions 5, 7, 8 and 13
8. Computer literate

* Previous applicants need not apply.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANTS ON COMMUNITY ORGANIZING/DEVELOPMENT

QUALIFICATIONS:

1. Bachelor's degree in either Community Development, Sociology, Human Ecology, Development Communication, Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries or related fields; preferably with specialization or equivalent formal training in agriculture/forestry/fisheries extension, community organizing, rural development, educational communication or training management;
2. At least two years credible experience in people-focused projects or with NGO work especially those dealing with forest, agriculture or fisheries based livelihood and environmental concerns;
3. With good technical writing and communication skills; and computer literate;
4. Must possess the ability to work well with the LGUs, communities and multi-disciplinary team of technical staff and experts;
5. Must be able to speak and/or understand the local dialect;
6. Must be willing and physically fit to travel to remote coastal and upland communities, and interact with LGUs, upland farmers, fisherfolks, village leaders and people's organizations;
7. Must be a resident or willing to be posted in Region V, VII, VIII and XIII.

Requirements: One (1) each for Regions V, VII and XIII; Two (2) for Region VIII

Interested applicants may send their letter of application, resumé, transcript of records, and 2x2 picture not later than **March 6, 2001** to:

COMMUNITY-BASED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROJECT
Attention: THE PROJECT MANAGER
7th Floor, EDPC Building
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Republic of the Philippines
Province of Cagayan
Municipality of Amulung
OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL MAYOR

INVITATION TO BID

The Municipal Government of Amulung with principal office address at Centro, Amulung, Cagayan, invites all interested persons or entities to participate in the bidding for the purchase of two (2) units Reconditioned Japan: Isuzu DT preferably 10 PCI, 330 HP, 20 tons gross weight capacity (10 Wheeler) 3m series,(CBU) and one (1) unit Reconditioned Japan: Isuzu Forward DT preferably 6BG1, 10 tons gross weight capacity (6 Wheeler). The public bidding shall be held at the Office of the Municipal Mayor at Centro, Amulung, Cagayan on March 9, 2001 at 10:00 o'clock in the morning.

All interested persons or entities are to submit to the Office of the Municipal Mayor not later March 6, 2001 at 10:00 o'clock in the morning, vital documents necessary for pre-qualification to be conducted by the Municipal PBAC on the same day.

All pre-qualified prospective bidders are to submit their sealed proposals in two (2) copies to the PBAC not later than the date and time and at the place of public bidding above-mentioned. Proposals must be accompanied with a proposal bond in the form of cash, certified or manager's check, or bank draft, or any combination hereof payable to the Municipal Treasurer of Amulung, in the amount of 5% of the bid proposal, and Two Hundred pesos (200.00) as bidder's fee.

The right is reserved to reject any or all bids, to waive any formality thereon or to accept such bids as may be considered advantageous to the government.

All communications relative to this invitation must be addressed to the Office of the Municipal Mayor at Amulung, Cagayan.

Amulung, Cagayan, February 26, 2001.

(Sgd.) NICANOR C. DE LEON
Municipal Mayor/PBAC Chairman

(PDI--Feb. 28, 2001)

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DAGUPAN SEMINAR: (4 in 1) Date : February 28, 2001 (Wednesday) Time : 03:00 p.m. Venue : Star Plaza Hotel AB Fernandez Avenue, Dagupan City	Fee: P 700 pre-paid P 1,000 walk-in Tel: (075) 515-4973 522-7829 515-5726 (0918) 910-2994
MANILA SEMINAR: (Australia & New Zealand only) Date : March 03, 2001 (Saturday) Time : 11:00 a.m. Venue : Philippine Trade Training Center (PTTC) Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Pasay City	Fee: P 700 pre-paid P 900 walk-in Tel: 891-5924 891-5624 891-5636 (0917) 466-8097

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The Management and Staff of

MTJ APPAREL EXPORT, INC.

deeply mourn the passing away of

PHILIP T. DUYONGCO

Chairman and President
September 13, 1936 - February 2, 2001

He died in Houston, Texas, USA on February 2, 2001.
He is survived by his wife Lulu, and
daughters Michelle, Tanya and Marjorie,
brothers and sisters, other relatives and many friends
request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

A memorial service will be held on
March 2, 2001 at 6:00 PM
at Christ The King Parish Church (Parish Hall),
Greenmeadows Avenue, Quezon City.

So Lovingly Remembered
So Sadly Missed

VIRGILIO M. GARCIA

on his 8th Death Anniversary
February 28, 2001

Please join us in prayer for the eternal repose of his soul.

ISABELITA G. RABELAS

of Oas, Albay

Peacefully joined her Creator on February 25, 2001 at the age of 55.

Her loving son **Bong-Bong**; brothers **Bol, Raul, Joey & VicVic**; sisters **Sonia, Gilda, & Menchu**; brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, nephews, nieces, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at Arlington Memorial Chapels, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Saturday, March 3, 2001 at the Himlayang Pilipino Memorial Park, after the 8:00 a.m. Mass at the Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Road 8, Project 6, Quezon City.

BERNARDO CABRAL VILLANUEVA

March 2, 1935 – February 24, 2001
of Orion, Bataan

His bereaved wife **Leticia**; children **Ma. Lorellie & Wilbur Cala, Roshenar & Antonio Cruz, Karenina & Ronald Joaquin, Alma Desiree & Nestor Dalipe, Bernardo & Vivian Villanueva, Thomas Leonsius & Divina Villanueva, Archibald & Ellen Villanueva,** request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at Villa Angeles, Orion, Bataan.

Interment will be at Evergreen Memorial Park, Orion, Bataan on March 1, 2001 at 1:30 p.m.

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OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

Ma. Sol Rodriguez Santos

January 30, 1925 - February 26, 2001

Died in the Grace of our Lord
at the age of 76.

Her bereaved husband **Engr. Ricardo B. Santos**; children **Marie, Rene, Oscar Candy,** and **Sonia** and their spouses, her sisters, grandchildren, and other relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

Her mortal remains lie in state at the Damilag Farmhouse, Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon.

Interment will be on Saturday, March 3, 2001, at the Damilag Cemetery, after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at the Damilag Chapel.

MESSAGE OF THANKS

Time, they say, heals everything. And so as time slowly passes by, farther and farther she drifts away. But our love and the so many memorable memories she left behind bind us to her for the remaining days of our lives.

Thank you Lord for everything as we finally say Goodbye to a truly great, loving, caring and generous Mother

CANDELARIA (ANDING) CASTRO-AGCAOILI

(Laoag City)
February 2, 1918 - February 4, 2001

And to all of you who condoled with us in our deepest moment of grief, we sincerely say thank you. You were, indeed, a great source of strength and courage to us in subduing the pain and grief over our Mother's loss. May you always remember her in your prayers and memories.

God Bless You All!

Danding, Eddie, Mercy & William, Monica

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Exhibit on power, energy technologies set Sept. 25-27

POWERTRENDS 2001, the 4th international exhibition on new trends in technologies for energy and power engineering, will be held on Sept. 25-27, 2001 at the World Trade Center Metro Manila.

PowerTRends 2001, which is endorsed and supported by the Department of Energy and the National Power Corporation, incorporates New and Renewable-Energy 2001 and Electec 2001. It will also be held concurrently with PowerTech Business Forum 2001, the 5th international business forum on power energy and management.

"'PowerTRends has provided since 1995, a vantage position in the power platform for energy and power industry players. Held every two years, it has consistently drawn exhibitors, mostly power and energy leaders from various countries, among them the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Denmark, France, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Austria, Belgium, China, Hong Kong, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, Thailand, Taiwan and The Netherlands.

The last PowerTrends held in 1999 drew 118 exhibitors from 20 countries, including two pavilions put up by the United Kingdom and Korea.

The emerging technologies for new and renewable energy, including biomass fuels, solar energy, and tidal. concepts, take center stage in PowerTrends 2001. This underscores the need for the installation of NRE systems in areas not linked to the main electricity grid as part of the rural electrification program of the Philippine government.

Also up for exhibition are various technologies for energy and power generation ranging from power plants and generating sets and systems to power distribution and transmission, from power plants installation and processes to process control and instrumentation for power plants and industrial applications.

Organized by Singapore-based Interfama International and Interfama Philippines, PowerTRends 2001 will be supported also by the Renewable Energy Association of the Philippines and the UK-DTI New and Renewable Energy Program.

THE BEST
IS GETTING BET

BEST SALES PERFORMERS

The Purefoods-Hormel Co. (PHC) recently feted the company's best sales performers during the Man of the Year 2000 Awards held at the Edsa Shangri-La Hotel. The awards program, themed "The Best is Getting the Better," was attended by PHC's top sales personnel nationwide. The coveted man of the Year Award was given to Jovy Gamalinda (third from right) while the Sales Manager of the Year Award went to Douglas Porter (center). Flanking the awardees are (from left) Timothy P. Barinka, Hormel Foods International Co. vice president for Asia Pacific; Ernesto P. Sotto, PHC senior vice president for sales/marketing/PDD; Francisco S. Alejo III, PHC president; Renato R. Montemayor, Pure Foods Corp. president and Richard A. Bross, Hormel Foods International president.

HOTWHEELS MAN

Hotwheels, the world's No. 1 die-cast toy tapped teen idol Onemig Bondoc to be the Hotwheels official product endorser. He is shown here signing the contract with Maye Yao, Richwell marketing manager. Hotwheels is exclusively distributed by Richwell Trading Corporation, 25 Quezon Avenue, Quezon City

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DUNN

YORAC

DR. Rita Dunn, executive director of the International Learning Styles Network based at St. John's University in New York, leads speakers in the second national education conference on the theme "Creating an Enhanced Learning Environment Through Individual Learning Styles" on March 1 and 2 at the Philippine Trade Training Center at Roxas Blvd. corner Buendia, Pasay City. Conference chair Laywer Haydee B. Yorac said participants will learn how to identify and expand their unique learning styles characteristics; design and use specific strategies to respond to varied learning styles; re-design conventional classroom to respond to learning style differences; and to teach students to teach themselves. The Center for Learning and Teaching Styles, Philippines (CLTS) is the organizer of the event. Interested parties may call 374-4967, 631-6535, 931-6276 or 633-4864.

All set for RP's biggest aviation, maritime and defense show

IT'S all systems go for the 7th International Aviation, Maritime and Defense Show (AMD 2001) set April 5-8 at the Philippine Trade and Training Center (PTTC), CCP Complex. AMD 2001 is a biennial exhibit for the world's top producers and service providers of the latest air, land and sea systems and technologies for commercial, industrial, leisure and defense. The show is a converging point of major players in these sectors because of the numerous benefits they derive from AMD.

AMD is an excellent platform to launch new products to a specifically targeted audience. It is also a venue where exhibitors can get the chance to meet directly with key-decision makers, procurement experts and buyers from here and abroad. In effect, new directions and new business opportunities, which the AMD can generate, is not only limited to the local scene but to other countries, as well.

Interested parties may direct their queries to ADSI, Inc. at 633-1452, 633-2002, 633-0166 and 634-1836. For further inquiries contact the organizers at (632) 633-2002/2452/0166, fax number (632) 634-1702, email at exhibitions@adsi-inc.com or visit our website www.adsi-inc.com

COMMASIA EXHIBITOR

International Exchange Systems Inc. (IESI) confirmed its participation in CommAsia 2001 to be held from May 24-26 at the World Trade Center. Shown during the contract signing ceremonies are (from left) Erwin Fernandez, IESI Battery sales division manager; Sarah Jane dela Cruz, IIR project officer; Joris Spanhoff, IESI general manager and Jing Lagandaon, IIR deputy managing director.

INQUIRER TRiViA

By BONG BARRAMEDA

Peks man

Q. Why do we say *peks man* when swearing that what we're saying is true?

A. The *peks* in *peks man* is a Tagalog corruption of *pecado*, Spanish for "sin" -- so the phrase actually stands for *"kasalanan man."*

For The Record. The Munchausen syndrome is a term given to a condition in which patients lie about their medical condition, invariably providing more dramatic symptoms and ills that are warranted or truthful. Unlike the hypochondriac who sincerely believes he or she is ill (even if such might not be the case), those who exhibit the Munchausen syndrome know that they are not ill but wish, for various psychological reasons, to make the doctor or hospital believe they are sick. The term is named after a semifictional character who was based on Baron Karl Friedrich von Munchausen, who fought in the Russian cavalry against the Turks from 1737 to 1739. When he retired in 1760, he regaled his friends back in Germany with what were regarded as exaggerated stories of his exploits.

Qoops! In 1988 Sweden's Health Ministry Ethics Committee chastised a hospital nurse and a surgeon who mistakenly removed a patient's testicle. The error occurred when two men were scheduled for urological operations in adjacent rooms, one for prostrate cancer and the other for minor exploratory surgery. To avoid any mix-up, the nurse gave each patient a number -- only she gave both the same number. When the surgeon got to the number, he assumed the patient was the one with cancer and quickly cut off one testicle. He was about to remove the other testicle when someone noticed the patient was the one scheduled for exploratory surgery.

WORD WATCH

Testicle (tes ti k'l): from the Latin *testis*, 'witness'--in Roman times, men took an oath on their testicles, and what they said became their *testimony.*

PDI -- February 28, 2001

OBITUARIES

ATTY. BONIFACIO S. PICSON

Of Hindang, Leyte

Peacefully joined his Creator
on February 26, 2001 at the age of 86
after receiving the Last Sacraments.

His loving children **Edgar & Karina, Marian & Melvin Aquino, Ma. Rebecca, Teresita Joyo, Ma. Linda & Arturo Astorga, Arturo & Berlina Suarez, Emerita & Simon Veloso** and **Victor**; brothers **Estanislao & Antonio**; brother-in-law **Ernesto Enage**; sister-in-law **Fortunata**; nephews, nieces, grandchildren and other relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Holy Trinity Memorial Chapels, Sucat Road, Parañaque City.

Interment will be on Saturday, March 3, 2001 at the Manila Memorial Park, Parañaque City.

ANNA DEL CARMEN COMIA

(widow of **GABRIEL COMIA, SR.**)

Peacefully joined her Creator on February 26, 2001
at the age of 72.

She will be most missed by her loving children and grandchildren **Jun** and **Cristy**, with **Charis, Girly** and **J.O.**; **Easy** and **Mena**, with **Norman, Michelle, Ali** and **Lucky**; **Art** and **Vicky**, with **Silke**; **Delia** (✝) and **Dong**, with **Mawi** and **RR**; **Roy** and **Jeanly**, with **Arvid, Fritz** and **Chazzy**; sisters, in-laws; nephews, nieces, relatives and friends.

Her remains lie in state at Sta. Brigida, Mansalay, Oriental Mindoro. Funeral Mass will be on Saturday, March 3, 2001 at Sto. Niño Parish Church.

Interment will immediately follow at the Roxas Cemetery.

Eternal life will swallow up that which can die. God made us for this very reason and He has given us the Spirit as a guarantee that we will live again.
2 Cor. 4:14

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QUEZON METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT
Lucena City Tel. Nos. 71-33-52; 71-20-55

INVITATION TO BID

The Government of the Philippines has received a loan from the **Japan Bank of International Cooperation (JBIC)** under the **20th Yen Credit Package** to finance the cost of the **Quezon Metropolitan Water District (QMWD) Water Supply System Comprehensive Improvement Program.** As its equity participation in said Program, the QMWD will undertake and finance the cost of the **PAGBILAO-LUCENA Transmission Lines Project** which is a component part of the said Improvement Program.

The QMWD invites Local Water Utilities Administration (LWUA) accredited Suppliers to submit sealed bids for the supply of 250 mm diameter Pipes and Fittings for its **Pagbilao-Lucena Transmission Lines Project.**

Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information and Bidders Tender Form starting **February 21, 2001** until **March 14, 2001** from the **PBAC Secretariat** at Red-V, Ibabang Dupay, Lucena City upon presentation of original certificate of accreditation issued by LWUA.

Opening of bids will be on 30 March 2001, 2:00 p.m. at QMWD Conference Room.

QMWD reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any informalities in the bid received and to award the contract to bidder whose bid, as evaluated, is the most advantageous to the QMWD.

ENRICO F. PASUMBAL
General Manager

(PDI - Feb. 21 & 28, 2001)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS
Philippine Coast Guard - Project Management Office
MARITIME SAFETY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT - III

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

CONSTRUCTION OF FOUNDATIONS; ERECTION OF TOWERS; INSTALLATION OF EQUIPMENT, INCLUDING LIGHTNING PROTECTION SYSTEMS; AND, COMMISSIONING OF TWENTY FIVE (25) LIGHTHOUSES IN VARIOUS SITES, COVERED BY MARITIME SAFETY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT, PHASE III (MSIP III)

The Department of Transportation and Communications - Philippine Coast Guard - Project Management Office (DOTC PCG-PMO) is inviting General Contractors for the aforementioned Project.

The scope of works cover civil; tower erection; electrical installation; and other miscellaneous works to complete the Project. Prospective bidders should have valid license and classification issued by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB), with the following particulars :

Category and Classification	IAC Registration
Category: "A" Classification: General Engineering	Range: At least Medium "B" Kind of Project: Ports, Harbor & Offshore Engineering

The Instruction to Bidders; Bid Forms; General Conditions; Technical Specifications; Plans and Drawings shall be available for issuance to interested bidders from March 2-7, 2001 at 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM at the PCG-PMO Office, 2F S&L Bldg., 1500 Roxas Blvd. Cor. R. Salas St., Ermita, Manila with telephone no. 525-8843, upon presentation of original valid license and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Five Thousand Pesos (PHP 5,000.00) at the Cashier's Office, DOTC Main, 5th Floor Columbia Tower, Ortigas Avenue, Mandaluyong City.

The deadline for submission of the duly accomplished documents shall be on 21 March 2001, 10:00 AM at PCG-PMO Office and a Pre-bid Conference is scheduled on 07 March 2001 at the same time and place.

The PCG-PMO reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reasons, to waive any formality or technicality, and to award to any bidder whose proposal is deemed most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) **COMMO REUBEN S. LISTA**
Commandant, PCG and
Director, PCG-PMO

(PDI--Feb. 27, 28 & March 2, 2001)

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New work styles in the new workplace

By Ernie O. Cecilia

THIS is the generation of the dotcom yuppies or the umppies (upwardly mobile professionals) in the new economy. The work styles of past generations might have worked for the Baby Boomers and even for the GenXers. But these work styles of yesteryears may be irrelevant or immaterial now.

Let us review the old work styles and compare them with the work styles that will enable one to succeed in the new economy.

1. *Padrino* system vs. meritocracy

In the Philippine and Asian settings, the old *padrino* system worked well, particularly with the value of *utang na loob*. It helped you get started if you had a *padrino* or go-between who could introduce or vouch for you in getting a good job or closing a business deal.

In the new workplace, meritocracy is the order of the day. While the *padrino* system can get you a foot in the door, it will not guarantee you a good job or a good business deal. At the end of the day, the important question is whether you can give something of value in exchange for another thing of value.

2. Adapting to change vs. creating change

In the past, you could be comfortable if you just knew how to adapt to change, adopt changes and be adept in them. Today, change is a way of life in the new workplace. When you think you know all the answers, somebody will change the questions.

If you want to survive and thrive in the new workplace, change your attitude toward change. In fact, you've got to be able to create changes in your own work processes, products, services and environment. If you think you were born simply to adapt to changes, you'll be surprised that you will always be on a catch-up mode. Try making the changes yourself.

3. Specialization vs. multi-skills

In the past, you had to be a specialist or expert in something to create a niche in the corporate setting. Specialization gave people a sense of value and became their security blanket.

Today, companies choose job applicants who have several skills that will allow them to create value for the customer and do a variety of jobs over their career life. Several sets of skills are usually needed in the new workplace as employees will float from team to team, or from job to job, or as they shift from one career to another.

4. Individual performer vs. team player

If you were a star player in the past, you'd have a good career. There was too much emphasis on personal goals, personal performance, personal evaluation, personal rewards, etc. People therefore tended to compete against each other, instead of working together against the real competition in the marketplace. I once worked with a company whose divisions and people competed with each other, to the delight of the closest competitor.

Today, new employees are joining a team, not a department. Aside from technical skills, good interpersonal and team skills, as well as negotiating, communicating and presentation skills are now required by the new workplace where teams will be the work norm.

5. Doing the job vs. being creative

The usual practice is people are hired and tasked to do a job. They are usually given a job description or listing of tasks and activities. That serves as their guide in their performance.

This concept of the job will die a natural death but we don't have to mourn its demise. Employees are now being given more generic position titles that allow them to transfer from team to team to do a variety of tasks required by the customers. The company will keep only employees who create value that the customer is willing to pay for. Employees must find creative ways to delight the customers, even if they are not directly serving the customers.

6. Minding one's business vs. social awareness

It was good practice in the past to just mind one's own business. People worked as if they were wearing blinders and then lost the line of sight between their own goals and those of the bigger unit. It is pathetic to think that some employees disregard customers' inquiries because their job descriptions did not list talking to the customer as part of their jobs.

Employees in the new workplace must be more socially aware and skillful. The new economy will require not just technical or functional competence but the so-called soft skills or people skills that will keep their eyes and ears open to the internal and external work environment.

7. College diploma vs. continuous learning

Before, the college diploma was almost a passport to a good job. But the reality is that after college graduation, one never ceases to learn in the workplace, if he wants to be relevant and useful. The more progressive organizations of today have transformed themselves into learning organizations.

Employees will do well in the new workplace if they will become "lifelong learners." At the rate the world is changing, thanks to technology, there is always something new to learn. Whoever learns about it first will have an edge. Those who never learn will never know why they've been blown away from the workplace.

8. Seeing the trees vs. seeing the forest

"The man who knows how will always have a job" is the first part of my favorite quotation. Know-how was a good asset to have when looking for a job in the past. That's probably why many people have mastered the job routines.

The second part of the quotation is, "but the man who knows why will always be his boss." In the new workplace, both skills (knowing how and knowing why) are required, even if you are not the boss. The new economy requires that employees must have the perspective to see both the trees and the forest at the same time. Myopia on the job will be a serious malady, nay offense.

9. God-given talent vs. technology

It was common during our grandfather's time to choose employees who had the brawn to do the job. Then, when Drucker and his ilk "invented" the "knowledge workers," companies opted for the brains. But mostly, employees relied on their personal talents, skills and competencies to get the work done.

Today and in the future, technology will do the work. But companies will still need a few good men to run the technology. San Miguel had a glass factory that required more than 3,000 employees to run. It later had a joint venture using Japanese technology that required less than 200 people to run a glass factory with a capacity several times more than the old factory. And the product quality is simply world-class!

10. Delineating everything vs. tolerating ambiguity

To work effectively in the past, you needed a lot of role clarification and delineation of responsibilities. People seemed easily confused when things were not clear or as expected.

Today, the new workplace will not clarify matters for you. You must be able to live with and tolerate ambiguity. You just have to be very flexible in your thinking and handling situations. Rules will be there as guideposts but there must be allowances for ambiguities, especially in serving your customers.

Have you for a moment thought that you should change your work style? Will you wait till somebody tells you SMB (style *mo, bulok*)?

As Harold Wilson admonishes us, "He who rejects change is the architect of decay. The only human institution which rejects progress is the cemetery."

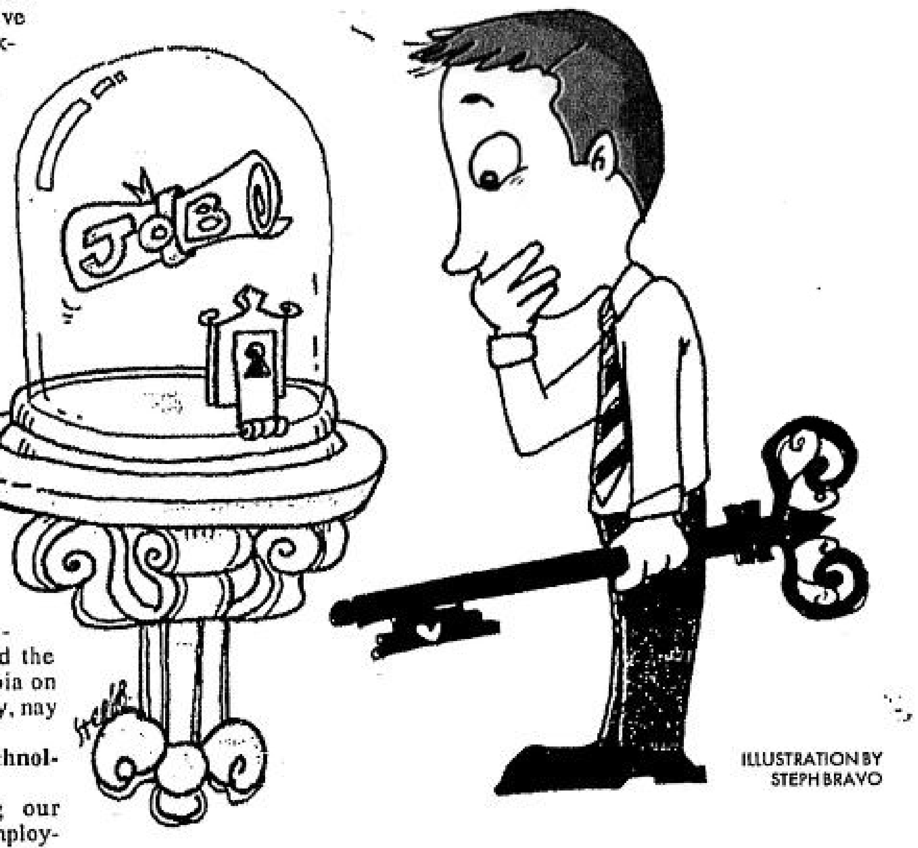

ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRAVO

Parenting...

(From page B16)

She points out, "It's important for parents (and children as well) to know themselves. Else, how can they know others? Parents must remove all masks and pretensions and be themselves instead. Our children are watching us. They try to please us because they want to be us." Persela says children are most troubled and hurt when parents fight or argue in their presence. "Mostly they go to their room and cry." This is very sad, she opines, because parents ought to cherish their children and give them happy memories to go back to in their adulthood.

Other programs

Persela, by the way, is not confined to Mater Carmeli School. Lately, she's been receiving invitations to conduct seminars outside. She has been to urban poor areas in Metro Manila. "I'm amazed at their response, at how open they are to insights. I wish we could have more of these encounters with them."

Recently, Persela was asked by Fr. Talanega to be a facilitator for *Kapilas* (other half), a program for seamen's wives, which she can readily identify with. No doubt she is willing to expand her training work, which admittedly has developed her. One day, she would like to do it full-time.

Persela's experience demonstrates that career paths don't always follow a straight line. Often, the ones that digress and take a different turn prove to be more fruitful and fulfilling. For Persela, this unexpected turn, which led to a personal mission, has become an apostolate. She intends to write a book on parenting but parenting seminars will always be her lifework.

As a parent, Persela is still learning. She believes life is dynamic and we should therefore be open to change. "Life is for living and sharing. But it's fleeting and temporary," she says. "In the meantime, our quest for our true selves continues. It never ends."

CEOs discuss challenges for leaders

CEOs and business leaders discussed last week leadership challenges in changing times in the 14th CEO Breakfast Forum hosted by Ancilla Enterprise Development Consulting, a full service management and consultancy firm.

It was a morning of sharing, learning and networking for CEOs and business leaders on how leadership development programs are implemented and sustained in their respective companies.

Peter Wallace, president, Economist Intelligence Unit Phils., Inc. Australian/ New Zealand Chamber of Commerce, gave a macroeconomic review. Other speakers were: **Carlos Ejercito**, president, United Laboratories; **Freddie Fernandez**, president, Team Pacific Corporation; **Joey Gurango**, managing director for Asia, Great Plains; **Ricardo Pascua**, president and CEO, Fort Bonifacio Development Corporation; **Jens Pedersen**, Tiwi Asset Manager, Philippine Geothermal Inc., and **Renato Vergel De Dios**, president and CEO, Manulife Philippines, Inc.

Ms Tita Puangco, president and CEO, Ancilla Enterprise Development Consulting, also presented to the group a leadership development curriculum that is being developed for the Ancilla Asia Leadership Center.

FEDERICO Fernandez, president of Team Pacific Corp.

JOEY Gurango, Great Plains regional director for Asia

RENATO Vergel de Dios, president of Manulife Phils., Inc.

PHOTOS BY JOHNNY VILLENA

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Improve concentration for peak learning

By Tita Datu Puangco

Advice
For the Anxious Person at Work

I AM 26 years old, working in a company. I was very happy to read your article regarding the practice of "living in the present moment." This is my main concern. I have the tendency to look backward but I have already changed that. But I am always thinking of the future. Honestly, my problem is not being able to concentrate well. Can you give me suggestions how to concentrate well? You may have come across books that can help me achieve better concentration, contemplation and meditation. These are important but how exactly do I get these qualities. Thank you and more power.

Distracted Employee

You have tried living the present moment. You mentioned in your letter two concerns: first, that you are always thinking of the future and second, that you want to be able to concentrate better.

Let me begin by saying that thinking about the future is important. It is critical for instance for a person to have a vision, an aspiration or a goal for the future. A vision gives meaning to life; it allows us to withstand difficulties and obstacles because one is moving towards something important. A person becomes responsible and committed to achieve his vision.

Attachment

But the problem is when we get too obsessed or attached. We become very single minded, forgetting that life is also about building relationships and friendships. Life is also being open to a sense of adventure. Do not get too attached. Be open to new possibilities.

I believe in the adage, "Man proposes, but God disposes." Sometimes we get disappointed because life does not turn out to be as we propose. But if we believe in Someone greater than we are, we know that a bigger and better design of life and love awaits us.

Take a balanced outlook

So how does one commit to his personal Vision, at the same time take a balanced outlook? Once again, one can draw from the principle of living the present moment well. If we live the present moment well at work or at home, we are in fact moving like a straight arrow towards the future we desire, not wasting time but with much enjoyment and serenity.

Timeshifting

Dr. Stephan Rechtschaffen, author of "Timeshifting" says, "The present is where life happens. We have to be proactive rather than be reactive. Take conscious responsibility for the rhythms you entrain with in this moment. We can become aware of the rhythmic flow of the present moment if we slow down in order to listen and feel. Understanding is impossible without serenity, serenity only exists when time moves slowly."

He proposes the technique of timeshifting which means constantly changing our rhythm, slowing or accelerating in order to feel present and in the flow of time. He suggests that being able to shift our rhythms will make our hours less anxious, our days less stressful and our lives more complete.

Now, on the aspect of concentration, I recommend to you the book "Peak Learning" by Ronald Gross. Concentration is a technique for us to learn better and faster. Today with the rapid expansion of knowledge we have to become excellent learners, in fact, lifelong learners.

Peak learners

Gross talks about the unique qualities of peak learners. First, they feel best about themselves when they are learning something new. They keep themselves open to new ideas and experiences.

Second, they are aware of the many things they do not know. But this does not bother them. The very fact that they don't know excites them. They are not afraid to ask dumb questions.

Third, they learn from different sources. They listen to experienced people. They use a variety of media and sources.

Fourth, they have confidence in their ability to learn. They know that everything can be learned—it is simply a question of following the right steps or zeroing in on the right information.

Finally, they believe that investing time in their own personal growth is the best investment in their personal and professional future.

Flow state

Some of the techniques being proposed by Gross that have helped me in learning are entering the flow state, discovering your personal learning profile, and mind mapping.

Getting to flow is achieved through relaxation and activating the learner in you. Relaxation means letting go of daily strains and resetting your mind for a new task. He cites the importance of ritual, a set of steps you take for the purpose of clearing your mind in order to enhance concentration. For activating the inner learner, he proposes visualization, imagining vividly what we feel like when we do it. You picture yourself doing well.

In my previous article, I talked about the personal learning profile. Are you a lark or an owl? Are you at your learning best early in the morning or late in the evening? The other question to ask is, are you a grouper or a stringer? Do you learn bottom up or top down?

Grouper vs. stringer

A grouper prefers to take a broad view of a subject, searches out general principles and are quick to find relationships. He learns most effectively in unstructured situations and in the use of eclectic approaches. A grouper looks out for big ideas, basic concepts and organizing principles.

A stringer goes for the more systematic and methodical approach. He learns most successfully by mastering specific details before moving to more general concepts. He establishes a series of clearly defined goals that allow knowledge to be accumulated gradually. He is interested only in facts that are directly related to the subject. He ignores temporarily all other information, no matter how interesting.

Mind mapping

Then, a useful technique that helps me concentrate is mind mapping. Mind mapping is a simple process of linking and integrating key concepts, words and relationships structured the way the mind works. It starts from the center or main idea and branches out to individual ideas as they relate to a central theme. It uses the technique called clustering. It appeals most to those with high visual intelligence. Mind mapping activates your mind, allowing you to absorb information.

The book I am suggesting contains other interesting techniques you may wish to try and experiment on. I wish you all the best and may you soon become a peak learner capable of learning rapidly at the same time moving towards your goals with minimum anxiety and stress.

(Ms Puangco is CEO and president of Ancilla Enterprise Development Consulting. For comments, feedback or advice for problems at work, you can send email to ancillaedc@pacific.net.ph *or a fax message through fax no. 892-2902.)*

ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRAVO

People at Work team visits San Beda

PEOPLE at Work's writers/consultants will visit San Beda College on March 1, Thursday, from 4 to 6 in the afternoon at the Abbot Lopez Hall to conduct a symposium on "How to Plan Your Career Before Getting a Job." The panel includes Recipes for Learning columnist and Paradigms and Paradoxes President, Moje Ramos Aquino; consultants from Ancilla Enterprise Development Consulting, Inc. who write Advice for the Anxious Person at Work; 1999 President of the Personnel Management Association of the Philippines and regular Skills Toolbox writer Ernie Cecilia; and People at Work editor and HR consultant, Regina Galang Reyes. The panel will conduct group activities and give lecturettes on personal visioning, self-assessment, career options, selecting a great company to work for and entrepreneurship.

Schools who are interested in inviting People at Work writers/consultants for a similar symposium may email *peopleatwork@inquirer.com.ph* or call Roche Leonor at tel. no. 897-8808 local 554. Panelists are sharing their expertise free of charge as a service to graduating students to better prepare them for the workplace, whether as an employee or as an entrepreneur.

Act on your life plan

RECIPES for LEARNING

By Moje Ramos-Aquino

ONE of my for-the-soul lifetime plans is to attend the yearly Mapa High Foundation Day and Alumni Homecoming. This year, it was held last Sunday at Club Filipino and was the 78th such celebration. It feels great to see those who graduated from high school even before I was born still enjoying life and looking forward to next year's big event. The oldest alumna who attended this reunion belongs to Class '38 and the youngest is an alumnus from Class '2000. Wow! We get giggly reminiscing high school days with my classmates and schoolmates of Class '64. I also got to dance the real ballroom dances, not the DJ-led same-steps-for-all-music type. You know, tango as in the real tango, boogie-woogie, chacha, rumba, samba, pasa-doble and waltz of yesteryears. *May pa-dip-dip pa!* We are the dancingest class with noted scientist and inventor Dr. Tony Mateo as our dancing king. It was also great trading stories with old chums. Respected veterinarian Dr. Benny Santiago reminded me that we sat at adjoining desks in our Spanish class. See you same time, same place next year, folks!

And so, I am inspired to get back to our Workshop on Setting Goals, Objectives and Action Plans. This year, I would personally want to achieve something that I could share with my schoolmates in next year's reunion. This calls for life planning.

So far, we have discussed and done lots of exercises on setting Big Life Goals (BLG) that you want to realize in the next three to five years. Likewise, you have set objectives or those statements about the key things you want to accomplish in order for you to realize your BLG. You set several objectives that are achievable in the mid-term or within one to two years, even 6 months, towards your BLG.

Action plans

Now you need to support your objectives with action plans (AP). These are the nuts and bolts of your life plan. They are detailed statements of exactly what actions you are going to take in pursuit of each objective. Our goals and objectives are SMARTS. (For definition, please refer to our previous columns) while our AP should have the following components:

- Activity: What you need to do in chronological or logical sequence. Listing down each critical step or action breaks up the BLG and objectives into smaller, individual and manageable components. Such detailed steps help you anticipate potential problems and/or opportunities that might arise for each action step. Then you can add steps to address such obstacles before they can affect your over-all plans.
- Time frame (Date Start and/or End): This is very important particularly for your time management. You need to know when these activities will take place and for how long. This is a solid measure of the quality of your output, starting and finishing on time. Also you will be motivated to work more effectively and efficiently when you are given a time frame.
- With Whom: You may not be able to do alone some of the activities required, therefore, you need to determine who will help you accomplish a particular activity or task. Likewise, you need to identify people who are responsible for making decisions when required.
- Resources Needed: What and how much money, people, time, places, organizations, offices, machine, processes and procedures, information, and other required or helpful resources do you need and when do you them?

Worksheet

Our sample Action Plan Worksheet is on this page for your guidance. Depending on your goals and objectives, your action plans may need more information or less. You might find it tedious to do Action Plans for each of your Objectives, but that is how it works. No pain, no gain. I assure you, though, of 100% accomplishment of your BLG & Objectives barring unforeseen events beyond your control such as natural calamities. You can handle all man-made barriers when you do your APs diligently.

Vance Havner once said, "The vision must be followed by a venture. It is not enough that you stare up the steps; it is also important that you step up the stairs." Next column, we'll give you some tips on how to restart your life using your life plan starting with your Action Plans. Then you will be ready for other workshops to better help you achieve your mission and big goals along the path of your vision using our values.

Do give us your suggestions on the particular topic you want to get more instructions on in our future workshops. Send us your preferences by snail mail or email. Actually, I am thinking of a Time Management Workshop. What do you think?

ASTD updates

This ASTD 2001 International Conference & Exposition is a large event, with 250 educational sessions to choose from. This diversity allows participants to link people, learning and performance and find sessions on the topics they care about. Sessions are organized in nine tracks, each focused on different issue area. These are Career Development, E-Learning, Global Issues, Human Performance Improvement, Managing the Learning/Training Function, Measuring & Evaluating Training & Performance, Organizational Development, Training Basics and Workplace Issues.

Join ASTD 2001 this June 3-7 in Orlando, Florida, USA. Call Adrian Aquino or Jenny Nunag Marquez at telephone 7159332 for details and special delegation package.

(Email feedback to moje.ramos@aquino.zzn.com.*)*

How do you deal with Personnel when you're looking for work?

WORKING WOUNDED

By Bob Rosner

DEAR WW: I usually do fine in job interviews but it's hard to get past the Personnel Department to even get offered an interview. Is there any way to get around Personnel?

Personnelly, I'm road kill

Dear Personelly,

Jobhunter vs. Personnel is a lot like David vs. Goliath: "little you" facing the giant Personnel monster. And you don't even have the luxury of a slingshot! Well, David, you do have options. You can toss a pebble—that is, your resume and cover letter—and try to hit them right between the eyes. Or, as I recommend, you can go out and recruit your own Goliath.

Believe it or not, that's what I learned when I spoke to the Kitsap chapter of the Northwest Human Resource Management Association. I asked them how they would deal with Personnel if they were looking for a job and to a person they agreed: avoid Personnel! (They swore me to secrecy, so please keep this sage bit of advice between you and me.) Start by contacting anyone you know at the company or anyone you know who might know someone. Or you can just call the company receptionist and probe to find out the manager's name (or the department that's hiring) and then approach that person (or department) directly.

Here are some other tips from your prospective employer's gatekeepers:

1. Have someone proofread your cover letter and resume. They all agreed: typos are the easiest way to reject an applicant.
2. Don't ever address your cover letter "Dear Sirs." Personnel departments are dominated by women. If you can't contact the manager who's doing the hiring, then at least address your letter to the Personnel Director by name. It will show your interest. (If you are answering an ad in the want ads that doesn't include the company's name then they suggest the always inoffensive, "To Whom It May Concern.")
3. Do some homework on the company, its products and its prospects. Personnel departments are always impressed when you've shown the initiative and commitment to do some digging.
4. Keep a list by your phone of every company and job you've applied for. Nothing looks as tacky as answering the phone, "Oh yeah, Microsoft. Now, what was that job that I applied for?" You've put lots of effort into your cover letter and resume, don't undo it all once you've got them hooked.
5. Follow up your interview with a thank you note. I asked the Personnel Director who recommended this if it wasn't sucking up. "Sure," she responded. "Sucking up is good." Need I say more?

And isncidentally, while you're looking for work, there's one more thing you need to do. If you do have to deal with the folks in Personnel, call 'em the name they prefer. These days, that's the Human Resources Department—even if they're not usually much of a resource to humans who are looking for a job.

Here are the results of the recent workingwounded.com poll: Which song best describes the role that Personnel Department's have played in your career?

—I'm sitting on top of the world, 5 percent

—With a little help from my friends, 37 percent

—Nowhere man, 58 percent

Our winning contest entry comes from Chris in Seattle. "Since it takes 10 contacts for someone to remember your name, you must learn to be persistent but polite. Find reasons to stop by the HR office. This is no time to be shy."

(Email feedback to bob@workingwounded.com*)*

ACTION PLANNING WORKSHEET

BLG #1: By November 30,2005 at the cost of Php2.5M, I would have built a split-level house with 120 sqm. floor area with three bedrooms, two bathrooms, living room with a foyer, a kitchen cum dining room area, two-car garage, surrounded with fruit-bearing trees and flowering plants on a 200 sq.m. lot in Antipolo City.

Objective #1: Starting with our March 30 payday and every end of the month thereafter, we would have saved 20 percent of our total income and placed in a trust account at Equitable PCI Bank, Sta. Mesa Branch.

	Activities/Critical Steps	With Whom	Date Start	Date End	Resources Needed	Comments
1.	Determine probable regular income for the next five years. Tuck in a salary increase of 10% per annum	Husband	March 3, 2001	March 4, 2001	Previous Pay Slips Paper & Pencil Calculator Five Hours	This is purely speculative.
2.	Determine probable expenses, regular and others, based on past pattern of expenses	Husband	March 3, 2001	March 4, 2001	Past Experience Receipts Paper & Pencil Calculator Five Hours	Give allowance to unexpected expenses or probable price increases
3.	Get information about Trust Accounts from Equitable PCI Bank, Sta. Mesa Branch. E.g. terms and conditions, rates, etc.	Husband	March 6, 2001	March 6, 2001	One Hour Paper & Pencil Calculator One Hour	Other banks may give better benefits
4.	Discuss and make decisions on necessary things like how much in pesos could we afford to save on a regular basis and others'	Husband	March 10	March 29	All necessary information Paper & Pencil Calculator 20 Hours	Need for firm, but practical, decisions
5.	Determine other probable income outside of regular paychecks	Husband	March 10	March 25	All necessary information Paper & Pencil Calculator 10 Hours	Purely speculative. Brainstorm on possibilities.
6.	Determine alternatives if regular income is not achieved	Husband	March 10	March 25	All necessary information Paper & Pencil Calculator 10 Hours	Could set up a weekend & special occasion catering service.
7.	Discuss plan with children, solicit suggestions and cooperation.	Husband Children	March 24	March 25	All necessary information Paper & Pencil Calculator 10 Hours	Revise plan, if necessary
8.	Open up a Trust Account	Husband Children	March 30, 2001	—	All necessary information Paper & Pencil Calculator 1 Hour	Yippeeeee!
9.	Regularly deposit 20% (Phpxxxxx) of combined monthly income to Trust Account	Husband Children	EOMonth	—	Phpxxxxx Deposit Slip Commitment & Determination	"I must, I must..."
10.	Review action steps every six months and revise if needed	Husband Children	Every May, November and when needed	—	All necessary information Paper & Pencil Calculator 10 Hours	Check for relevancy and materiality

e-mail: peopleatwork@inquirer.com.ph.

PEOPLE *at* WORK

RAUL O. MARCELO, Editor ■ REGINA GALANG REYES, Subsection Editor

Parenting is her lifework

BY CECILE G. GARCIA

CAREER*Tales*

PHOTO BY JOHNNY VILLENA

PERSELA believes Filipinos are good parents.

IRMA Persela is a parent and parenting is her career. A mother of four, her parenting career refers not only to rearing children, but also to her work in conducting effective parenting seminars.

She is a member of *Ugat* Foundation's training team that conducts *Hakbang*, a training program on effective parenting. *Ugat* is headed by Jesuit priest Nilo Tanalega. The program is usually conducted in coordination with schools for their students' parents. Persela, together with Carmelite Sisters Emi, Soc and Glynes, handles school-based parenting seminars. A husband-and-wife team, Bro. Ralph and Karn Ocomo, handles those that are community-based.

"From June to November, we conduct two-day seminars at Mater Carmeli in Novaliches (where her daughters are enrolled)," says Persela. "From December to March, we hold seminars on family relations and communication every weekend in Tagaytay. The seminar is for elementary and high school graduating students. It caters to their needs and to those of their parents." Persela provides the parent's perspective, while Sisters Emi and Soc take charge of the spiritual aspect. Persela's children assist their mother in conducting the seminar to provide the children's point of view. Incidentally, Persela is fully booked until May.

Grass widow

Persela is a housewife and a mother to Abigail, 20, Bernice, 18, Ma. Socorro, 17 and Antonio Aylemer (AA), 11. Her husband of 21 years works as chief marine engineer for a European shipping company, and because he is away most of the time—10 months out of 12—Persela thinks of herself as a grass widow and a single parent. As such, she's had to be both mother and father to her kids. By force of circumstance, the task of raising and taking care of them has fallen on her shoulders. "I would like to think that I've been a good parent," says Persela, who has learned that being one is not enough. "I have found out one has to be a responsible parent as well."

This discovery came about circuitously. Sometime in the early 90s, Persela recalls, she accepted an invitation from one of the nuns at Mater Carmeli School to attend parenting seminars conducted by *Ugat* Foundation's *Hakbang*. She says, "For a start, I participated in seminars related to very young children, and because my own kids were growing fast, I decided to also participate in those related to teens." Persela found the seminars effective. At the same time, she realized that as a parent, she was not doing enough and worse, she wasn't doing everything right. The parenting seminars goaded and inspired her to be an ideal parent. To be more precise, a responsible one.

More significantly, however, Persela realized she wanted to share what she had learned with parents like herself. "That was when I became aware that I wanted to be an active part of *Hakbang*," she avers. As preparation, Persela had to attend a series of seminars on growth given by Fr. Tanalega. "It's a continuing learning process," says Persela, adding, "Touching people's lives and making a difference have proved to be fulfilling and meaningful."

Regular job

However, Persela does have a regular 9 to 5 job. She works at the National Food Authority, where she is executive assistant to assistant for stabilization, AA Racho. She has been with NFA since 1973. "It's my first and last job," she quips.

Even though she has good credentials, she has deliberately chosen not to climb the traditional corporate ladder in her work so that she could have more time as a parent and for her parenting seminars. Persela has a degree in BS Economics and graduate units in business administration and communications management. She also has a diplomate in journalism from the Asian Institute of Journalism and Communications.

Persela knew that this was the correct path when, while pursuing her MA in Entrepreneurship at AIM, illnesses and deaths in the family, and a fractured foot occurred simultaneously. "When I fractured my foot, that was it, I couldn't even attend my classes," she recounts. Anyway, the confluence of events convinced her that she had to quit. "It was not meant to be. The lesson I learned was that we should be able to read the signs and interpret them."

Respect for children

Persela agrees that parenting is not easy. She expounds, "In general, Filipinos make good parents. But effective parenting means being responsible parents. It is not enough that we love and raise our children. We must respect their dignity as persons. The core of an ideal parent-child relationship is mutual love and respect, which has to be Christ-centered so that it can endure. I feel it all boils down to humility and patience." Often the most difficult aspect of parenting is for the parents to recognize and accept their mistakes. "But we must have the courage to be imperfect," contends Persela.

Parenting styles differ. Basically, informs Persela, there are three types: autocratic, which allows no freedom at all; permissive, which allows every freedom; and democratic, which allows freedom with responsibility. "The *Hakbang* style is democratic. This recognizes the child as an individual, a person with rights of his own and who needs to be respected. We must also teach him self-respect. Remember, if we love him, we must respect him. We can't live his life for him. We must guide and allow him to face the consequences of his choices. As parents, we should be able to let go."

Communication

According to Persela, the basic problem between parents and children is lack of communication. Usually, she observes, it is harder for parents to communicate with their children rather than vice versa. "We try to find out the level of communication between the two sides. During the seminar, parents and children engage in sharing sessions and intensive dialogues. There are also one-on-one dialogues between one parent, either the mother or the father, and his or her child. We teach them skills on reflective listening and problem solving, and familiarize them with the 'I message' by means of which they can communicate their feelings," explains Persela.

PARENTING/B14

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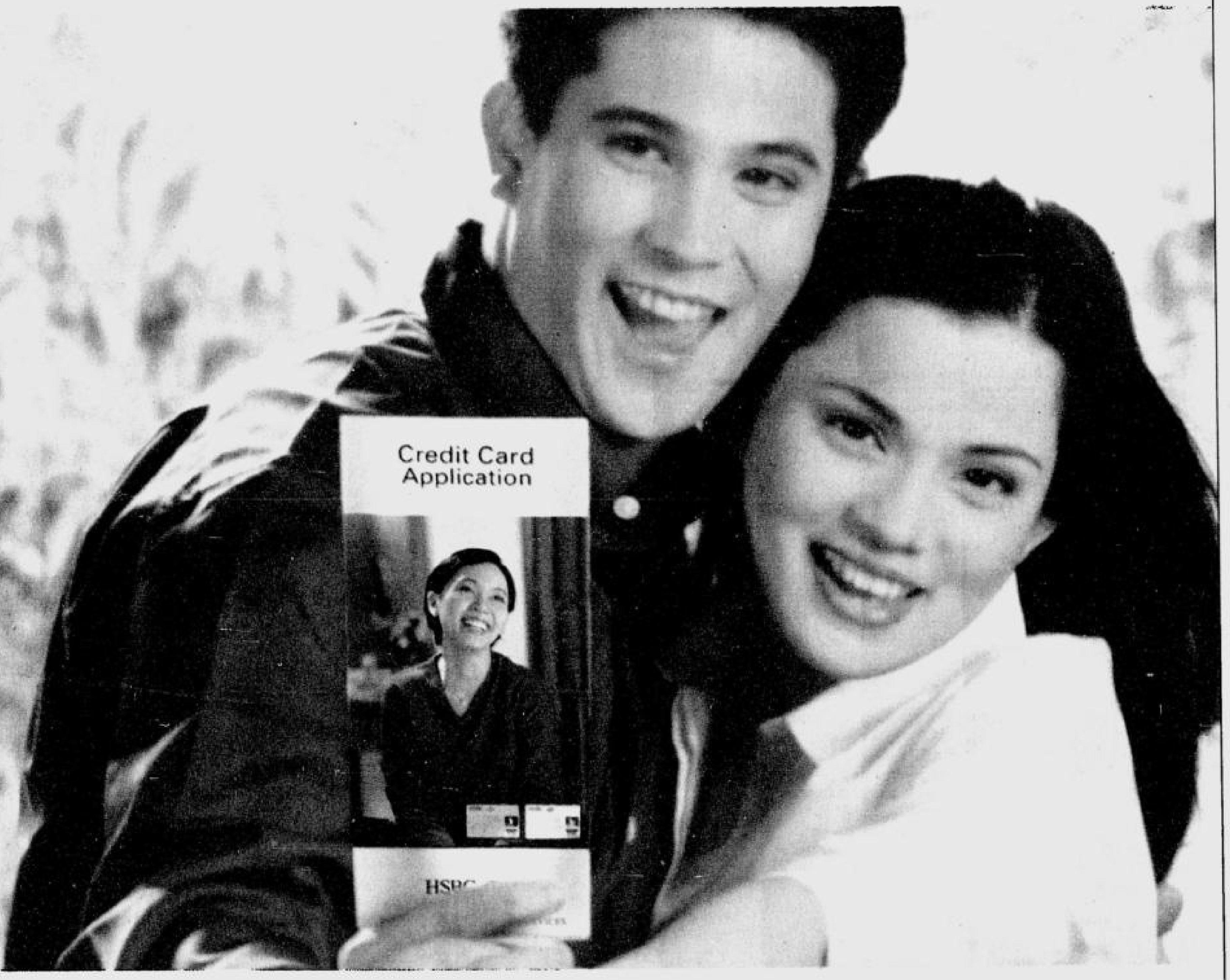

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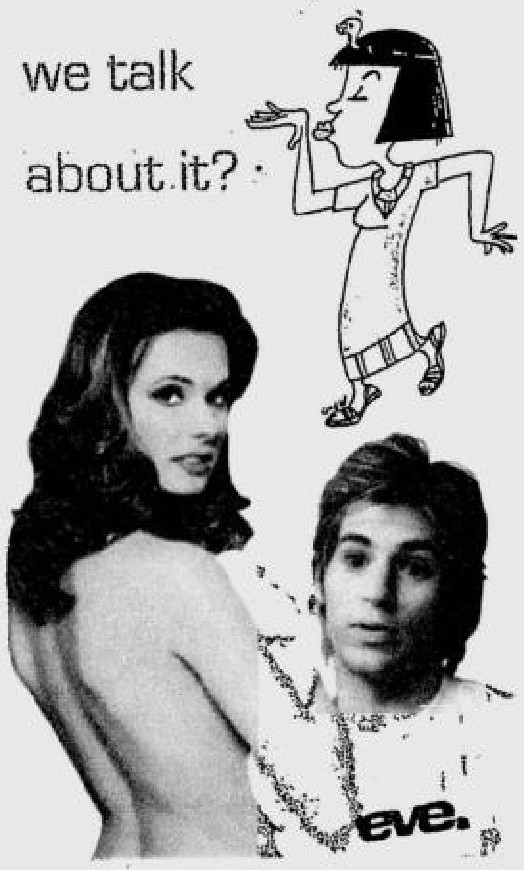

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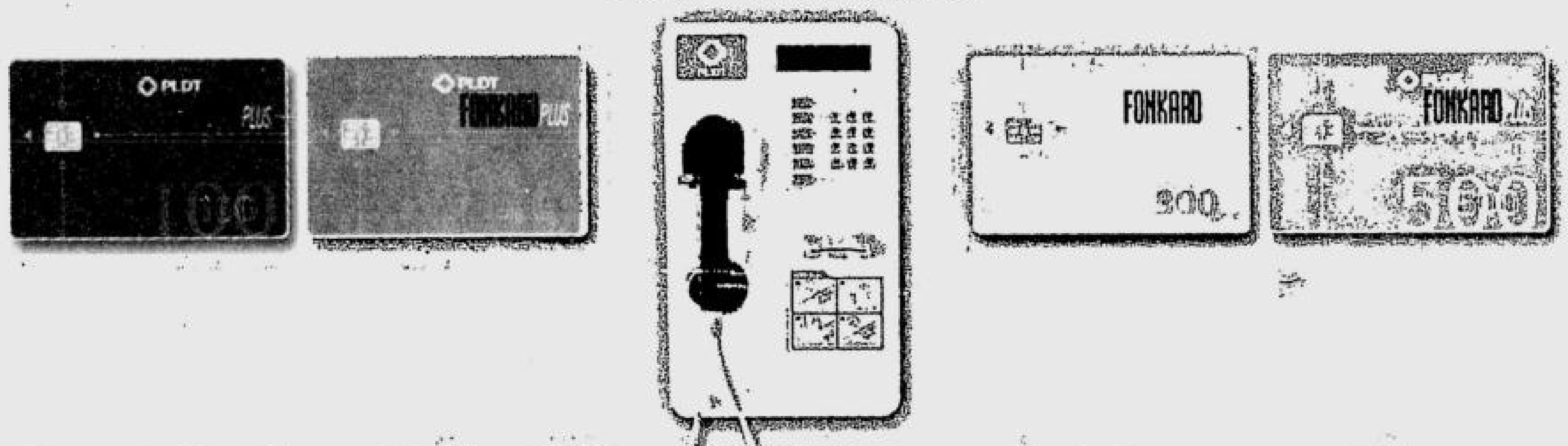

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Sex trivia

By Maui V. Reyes
2bU! Correspondent

BY now you've gotten your fill of sex info. What with magazines, movies, TV shows and friends shoving the topic in your face every 10 minutes. We've already established all the sex facts (you do it with someone you *really* love, practice safe sex, yada yada), gone through all the sex jokes (I won't even mention any), and had that *extremely* awkward discussion with your parents. Think you know your sex smarts? Know which mammal gets the most foreplay? That sex with a fish in the US is illegal?

Check out some sex trivia worthy of being in Ripley's museum. Just because you get more action than your pet rabbit doesn't make you an all-around smarty-pants (no pun intended).

Your dog Marty isn't the only non-human that's gay. Male bats have the highest rate of homosexuality than *any* group of mammals that exists. Apparently fruit bats have the highest tendencies among the bat family.

***

Talk about faithful—lions have sex *500* times with only one mate, to ensure fertilization. Simba will never be the same again.

***

It's illegal to have sex with a fish in Texas. It is illegal to get a fish drunk in Florida. In North Carolina, it is illegal to have sex with a drunk fish. Hey, don't look at me.

***

Who says you have to wait for puberty? Sperm whales are sexually mature as soon as they are born.

***

Some animals don't need to join the mile high club. Eagles get their nookie while going up to 60 mph in flight. It's also common for them to hit the ground before they finish.

***

If you don't want to be too obvious, grab that razor: A man's beard grows fastest when he anticipates sex.

***

The next time you fake a headache to get out of sex, well, the secret's out: a female orgasm is a pretty powerful painkiller, thanks to the release of certain hormones. Sorry, gals.

***

Here's another thing that will frustrate those who can't get laid: according to the World Health Organization, there are about 100 million acts of sexual intercourse each day.

***

Sex for one hour will burn off 11 Hershey's Kisses, equal to 360 calories. I'd rather walk.

***

Bill Gates is a heartthrob. Not because his looks beat those of, oh say, Brad Pitt, but because it's a fact that 50 percent of people fantasize more about money than sex. Give me a piece of that Microsoft!

***

Back in the old days, sheep weren't only used for wool. A certain Dr. Condom in the early 1500s invented the condom, made out of sheep intestine. Not to protect you against HIV or other STDs, Condom made it for Henry VIII, who wanted to bed other women without leaving any evidence (that would be children). These condoms are still available in specialty stores, but do you *really* want to be wearing *sheep?!* Also, back then the term *scumbag* referred to a condom.

***

Doctors around the world say that April 9, 1999 saw a lot of bedspringing action—chances are that if you conceived on that day, your lil' babe was born on Jan. 1, 2000.

***

Cats, too, get STDs, although they aren't as serious as humans. Feline STDs can be cured. Also, a certain musical note sexually excites cats...the same one that makes little kittens run for their litter box.

***

You might want to think twice before you start whistling that song stuck in your head: Whistling is a subconscious way to attract the opposite sex.

***

Armadillo sex organs, when disconnected, are still active. And I thought lizards' tails were gross.

***

Think twice before you cheat. Eighty-five percent of all men who died of heart attacks while having sex were cheating on their wives.

***

Maybe Anne Rice isn't such a pervert. The original Brothers Grimm tale of "Sleeping Beauty" had the prince rape her while she sleeps and leaves before she wakes up. Let's not ruin it for our little sibs.

***

The Latin word for "vagina" was "vanilla," because of the plant's pods, which resembles the female genitalia. Ice cream, anyone?

***

Random condom fact: Japan leads the world in condom use. They're sold door-to-door by women, just like your average Avon lady.

***

Remember your American history? The word "avocado" was derived from the Spanish word "aguacate," which was taken from the Aztec word "ahuacatl," which meant testicle. Pass the milk and sugar, please.

***

Cupid, that innocent-lookin' bow-and-arrow totin' angel was thought up by perverted Greeks. Back then pedophiles imagined Cupid to be a naked little boy, who supposedly symbolized "sexual love." It was the sexually repressive Victorian era that had Cupid don a skirt.

***

According to a survey in America, most deflowering takes place in June than any other month...think proms and weddings.

***

Rumor has it that lipstick was invented back during those Egyptian times for women who performed oral sex. They wanted their lips to look...er...inviting.

***

In 1999, a Florida sex phone operator won a worker's compensation settlement after she said she was injured from regularly masturbating as part of her job. Apparently she developed carpal tunnel syndrome on both hands from masturbating up to seven times a day while speaking to callers. Well, gee, like that was a job requirement.

***

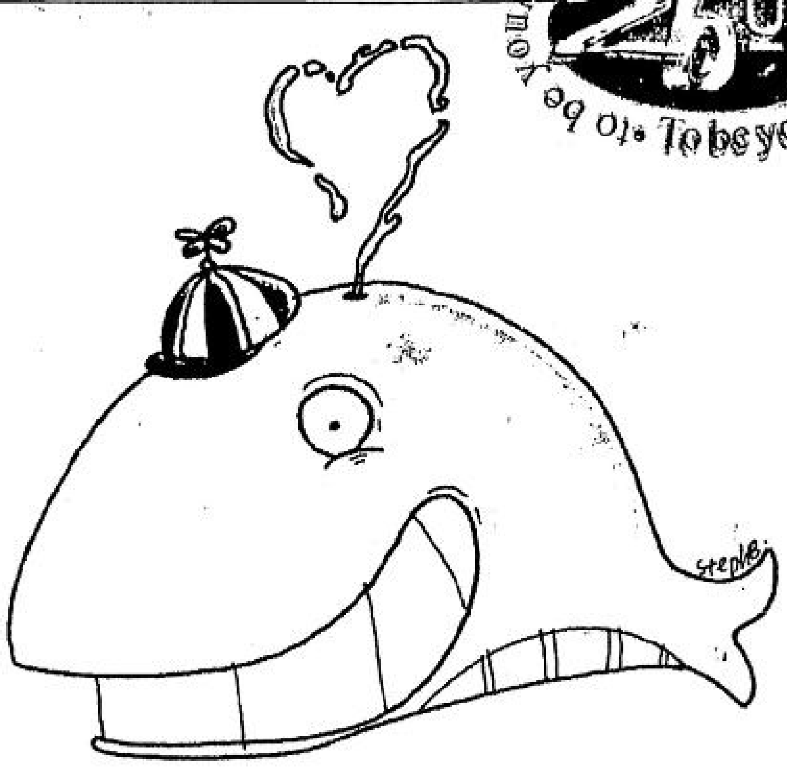
For those who believe Hello Kitty is evil, here's some good news: The little feline's purrs have reached the eBay online auction site, selling Hello Kitty vibrators. The text of one of the ads reads: "For the Hello Kitty fanatic who thought they had everything. Very Cute! 3-D Kitty Chan figure sits on top of a shaft of pink plastic with her little toy bear between her legs. On the shaft are the words "Hello Kitty" and a white outline of Kitty Chan's face. In a flowery plastic container with Japanese writing on it. 5.7 inches, with one AA battery (one speed)." Now *that's* what I call a sex "toy."

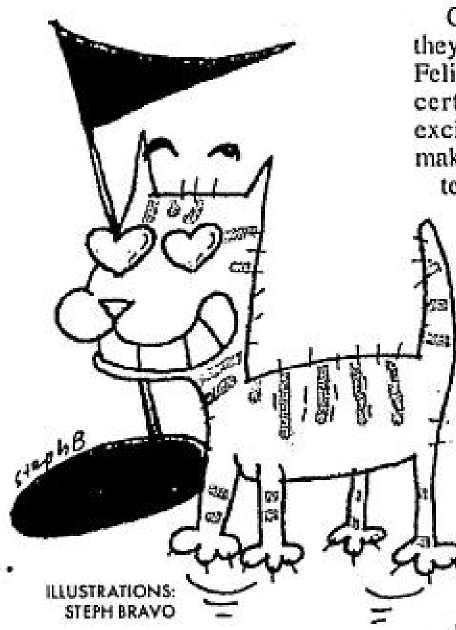
***

Bet you would have wanted to dine here—French restaurateur Jean-Louis Galland mixed 1/5 of a 50 milligram Viagra pill in each beef piccata he served. Only served to consenting adult diners, government inspectors made him stop whipping up the dish, since he was "dispensing drugs without a license."

***

The number of impotent pandas in Sichuan, China has gone down to 20 percent. Why? The China Giant Panda Research and Conservation Center has introduced porn. To stop their extinction, the animals were shown erotic *panda* films—other pandas having sex. According to director Zhang Hemin, the unusual strategy works.





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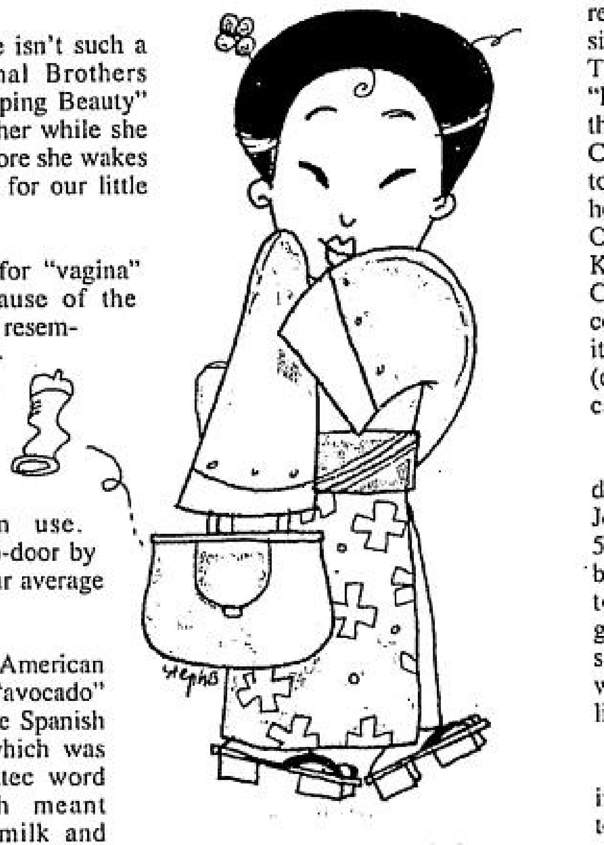

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Movie premiere benefits medical mission in Butuan

ST. Luke's Medical Center's Sagip-Bayan Foundation Inc. sponsors the advanced screening of the movie "Miss Congeniality" today, 7:30 p.m. at the Meralco Theatre in Ortigas Avenue, Pasig City. The movie stars Sandra Bullock as an unrefined FBI agent who goes undercover as a contestant in a beauty pageant.

The Sagip-Bayan's primary objective is to extend charitable aid and medical services to our less-privileged brothers and sisters living in depressed areas, and in the residences and provinces devastated by natural calamities. Among its past projects are medical missions in the lahar-stricken Floridablanca in Pampanga, Camarines Norte, Misamis Oriental, Mountain Province, Sámar, Malabon, Talao Talao and Butuan.

The proceeds of the movie premier will go to the expenditure for their next medical mission in Butuan City in March.

Call St. Luke's Medical Center at 723-8713 /-0301, local 4145.

Conference moved to another venue

DUE to the fire that razed the Philippine International Convention Center, the venue of the second national education conference scheduled on March 1 and 2, has been moved to the Philippine Trade Training Center on Roxas Boulevard corner Buendia, Pasay City. The conference carries the theme "Creating an Enhanced Learning Environment Through Individual Learning Styles" and is sponsored by the Center for Learning and Teaching Styles, Philippines. Registration begins at 7 a.m. Call 374-4967, 631-6535, 931-6276 or 633-4863.

parent trapped

ms. merit answers

Q I was told by a friend that my former employee who is supposed to be my friend said that I have been neglecting my children, so that she is always in my house to keep my children company. I am a single working mother and have provided well for my children and I am so hurt with her accusations. So far, I thought I have a happy family life. HRY

Did the hurt feeling arise from your bruised ego? Or are you hurt because you feel bad for your children? If you are hurt because of what your children are feeling, then talk to your children. Explain to them that you are doing your best and that assuming two roles, the breadwinner and motherhood, is very taxing in terms of time and energy. I am sure that you had your difficult moments. Tell them that without sounding as though you are complaining about your role and job. Tell them you are doing that because you love them and want the best for them. Ask for their understanding, moral support and love. What they are thinking and feeling is far more important than your friend's opinion or your motherhood ego.

On the other hand, there is no point to talk to your "friend". What for? First, if she is genuinely concern about you and your family, she would have told you herself instead of gossiping about you behind your back. As you said, you have a happy family. In the long run, people can tell what the real score is. In life, you will always bump into detractors and confronting them or worrying about what they are going to say is so futile. Remember a line in Desiderata, "Avoid loud and aggressive people, for they are vexation to the spirit."

Please send your questions to merit paper products, parent trapped, 88 Samson Road, cor MPL Road, Sucat, Muntinlupa City, or fax us at 02.842.1626.

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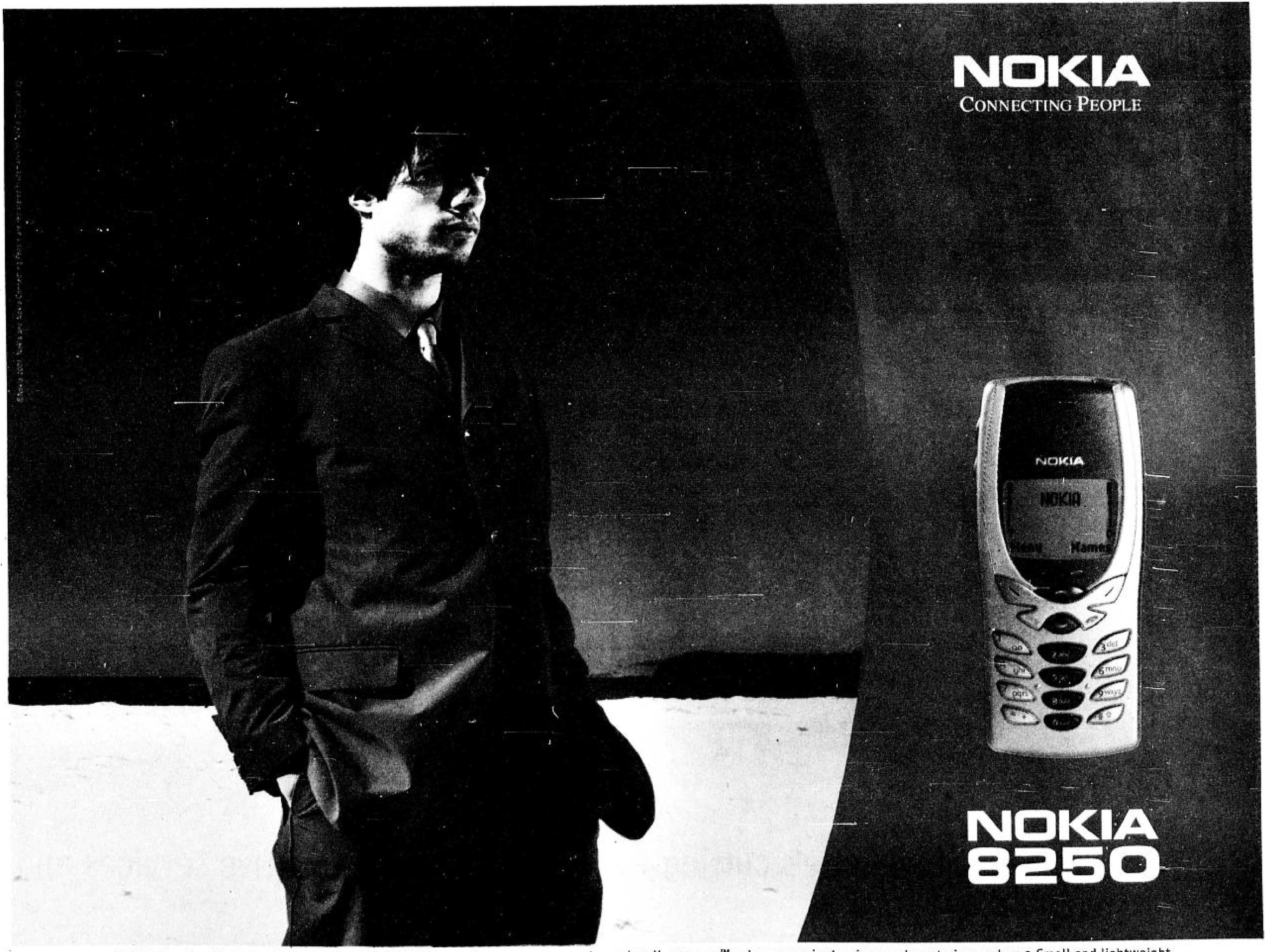
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Sex in one click

ALL it takes is one click to get me.

SHE can take it all off for you, but will you dare?

By Von Ryan Borines

IN THE PAST, pornography was a taboo subject for most young people. As defined, pornography comes from the Greek words "porno" and "graphia," meaning "depictions of the activities of whores." No wonder parents see it as a definite no-no.

When I was in grade school, having access to so-called "dirty" magazines was standard locker-room talk for boys, and the kids who usually got to see them fueled others' curiosity for them. The parents or older siblings of the "lucky" ones usually had pornographic materials, whether in the form of videos or magazines, stashed around the house and the kids happened to see them by chance. I may be breaking the guys' code of ethics here, but let's not deny looking under the mattresses or in the bottom drawers for a little peek of dad's mags at one time or another. It was much harder then to get to these materials because either dad or *kuya* kept his hiding place really secret, or there wasn't anything at home to search. One had to be content with just the locker-room talk, or if you were patient and really curious, wait in line to borrow a mag that was making the rounds. All that changed with the coming of the Internet. Now, there's no more waiting for the next guy to turn over the dog-earred goods. One can simply log on to sites that featured adult content.

On the Net

"Sex" is the most typed-in word on Internet search engines, and sexy images, aside from free music, are the most downloaded content on the Web. In 1998, 69 percent of revenues on the Internet came from Internet adult content such as site memberships and transactions involving adult merchandise like sex toys, magazines and videos. According to Dr. Victor Cline, a US-based clinical psychologist, the Internet is the leading source of pornographic material worldwide.

Just curious

Some young people who are into the Net are driven by curiosity to explore the world of online porn. According to Bryan, a 19-year-old Internet user, he just wanted to see what was in those sites that was different from other porn materials he was already familiar with. He was surprised to see how easy it was to access—readily available in any computer with a connection to the Net. He was also pleasantly surprised to find out that he didn't have to shell out anything to see the pictures or read the stories on the sites. There were many sites that were free which relied on the ads by more commercial adult-content sites. On the other hand, commercial adult-content sites featured "preview tours" for those who were interested in becoming paying members. These preview tours took the user into the different sections of the site and enticed them with phrases like "updated pictures daily" and various features like thumbnailed pictures, erotic stories and streaming video, which was just like TV.

It's not only guys who are looking at these pictures. Girls are logging on, too, like Jen, who's also 19. She said that she heard about several sites that were being discussed on "Oprah." She didn't stop at looking at the talked-about sites though. She also used the search engines to check out gay and lesbian sites that were also filled with adult pictures. She was surprised at how the sites had little or no security—not even a simple question of if the user was 18 or not. Whether it was a free site with lots of pictures or a commercial site that limited your access to the pics, there was enough content to satisfy her curiosity about adult material on the Web.

Both Bryan and Jen said that even if they felt free to visit these sites and were not guilty in doing so, they were worried about younger kids who might log on. Bryan even said there was a time he was at a Net café and he knew that the two high school girls beside him were laughing at nude pictures. Gone are the days when adult content was talked about in hushed tones and we wondered how we could get our hands on nudie pics. Porn is available now at a simple click of the mouse.

Three As

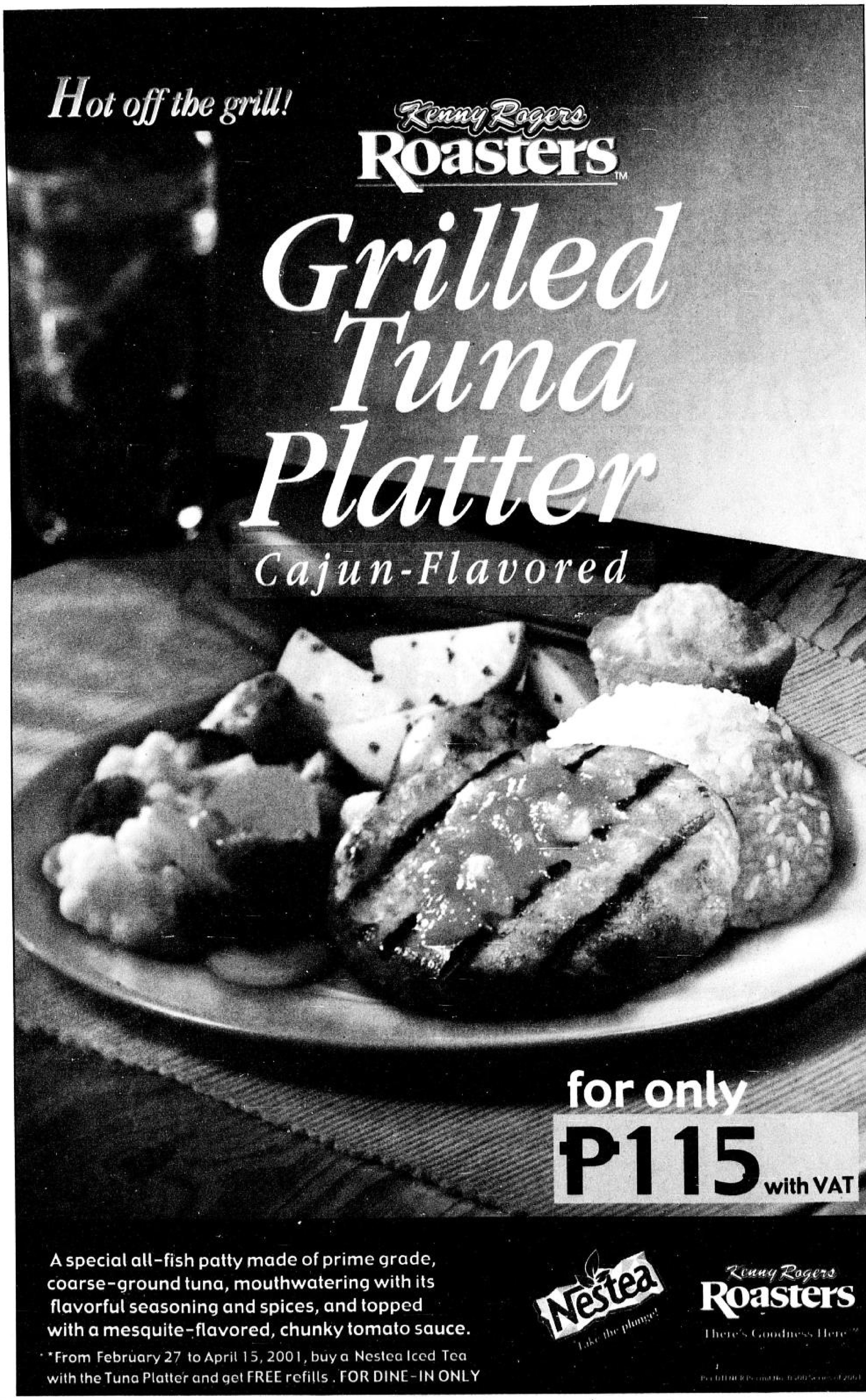
Internet porn is so popular because of its characteristic three As: It's accessible, affordable and anonymous. Logging on is as easy as pie, and a P30 to P60 per hour bill at Net cafés is enough for a lot of picture viewing and downloading (you just have to be really quick with the window button). Being on the Internet also makes the user nameless and mysterious until that person reveals info, which is not required by many sites. These three As of Internet porn are what makes it so easy for kids to be exposed to it, and consequently, its effects.

Not all lust

It is extensively documented in the United States what the effects of extensive exposure to pornography are, and these include sexual addiction, destroyed family relationships, lack of confidence in normal relationships and marriage, and violent sexual acts. Many sex offenders point to use of pornography as one factor why they committed such crimes. For many children, their exposure to online porn will never be that far-reaching. However, their exposure to these pics of sexual acts will rob them of the right way of learning about sex. These sites often show sex as expressions of lust and desire, and not as expressions of love. I may be turning mushy here, but those pictures don't show the romance behind the kiss. Sometimes a certain look from a girl you like is a lot sexier than a ton of pictures from the Net.

It's a given that young people are interested in sex. Its biggest turn-on is that it's something that's only supposed to be for adults, and being into it will mean you're on the road to being one. Besides, TV shows, ads and even songs nowadays are throwing the subject at young people, so why not get into online porn, too? But because it may be really easy to access these pictures doesn't make it right. It's a matter of following one's conscience and having the discipline not to give in.

There aren't many laws concerning punishments on getting online porn, but what's going to happen to a person inside and how it will affect him and his reaction to others are more important than being afraid of going to jail. When it comes to a special part of life like what sex is, it's more fun to have something to look forward to and take things slowly, rather than get it at one click and tire of it just as quickly.



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*From February 27 to April 15, 2001, buy a Nestea Iced Tea with the Tuna Platter and get FREE refills. FOR DINE-IN ONLY

Liz Clairborne dresses up Woodrose parents and kids

THERESE Chan and Stephanie Elumba

WOODROSE school in Alabang recently hosted a different kind of get-together for parents and kids. The agenda: nothing academic, everything about style. It was an evening of style talk from Mega Magazine and stylish clothes from Liz Clairborne.

The highlight of the event was a surprise fashion show featuring 13 of Woodrose's blushing freshmen girls and 23 parents. The girls and moms, of course, wore the latest from Liz Clairborne, and the dads the newest stuff from Clairborne Men. Classmates of the 13 young beauties and the entire freshman class' parents in the audience cheered and applauded the models-for-a-night as they posed and catwalked.

The message of the show was clearly to distinguish the dressing style of the young from the style sense of their parents. This was emphasized via two lecture and discussion segments which preceded the Liz Clairborne fashion show.

First, there was Meg editor in chief Liza Ilarde who addressed the parents on understanding their children's dress sense. Ilarde also provided advice to bridge the generation gap when it comes to style. The freshmen girls were handled by Family reader editor in chief Gia Herrerra who discussed "Where fashion ends and style begins."

With the fashion show, which also bolstered the camaraderie of the parents plus the informative talks, it was truly an evening of style sense and sensibility with loads of fun.

MAITA Ampil, Den Den Ventura and Chisay Batac

The Liz Clairborne fashion exhibited in the show are available at the Liz Clairborne store at 3/L Shangri-La Plaza Mall. Clairborne men stores are located at the Shangri-La Plaza Mall and 2/L Glorietta 4.

Sleek and stylish techno jeans

HI-TECH is in. Everybody seems to be carrying the latest gadgets like mobile phones and palm top computers like they are part of a clothing ensemble. These sleek and stylish gadgets can even be personalized and dressed-up according to your taste. That's what you call fashion in technology. Fashion equals techno plus style. Cool, don't you think?

Can this work the other way around? Can we put technology in fashion?

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Freego Jeanetics brings you two fresh and exciting looks as you choose your personal style with Indigo Tech and Techno Chino.

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Experience the thrill of twills with Freego Techno Chino (FTC), another cool style from Freego Jeanetics. It comes in various shades of earth colors for the chic person in you. A pair of FTC can go well with almost anything.

Whether it's a casual clay or gimmick night, you'll never go wrong with Freego fashion. Freego Indigo Tech (FIT) and Freego Techno Chino (FTC) are both designed with reconstructed back pocket and coin pocket, exposed single side front zip, stitching in zigzag matrix, multiple knee pleats and twin belt loops all to give you style, comfort and flexibility to move in whichever way you want to.

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Rufa Mae Quinto

The vamp is a riot

BY JULES ALCANTARA

YES, you are reading 2bU! and not some sleazy tabloid. You cannot deny that she is the perfect personality for 2bU!'s sex issue. For the record, it was the funniest, most laughter-filled conversation we have had with a personality. How does one manage to keep a straight face when talking to Rufa Mae Quinto?

She hammed it up for PDI's photographer and even thanked the janitors ("Thank you for your cooperation!") who did not at all mind that Rufa Mae was blocking their way. Mind you, she is not a ditz. In fact, it is safe to surmise that the whole "dumb" image is a calculated marketing ploy.

Okay, so maybe she doesn't exactly strike you as someone who would win hands down at Trivial Pursuit. But it does take a lot of smarts to figure out a way to deviate from the usual path of being just an extra or a wow-wow girl forever. It takes gumption to deal with overeager and boorish fans by intimidating them even before they can even utter a word or, worse, grab her. And only someone with a clear sense of self-acceptance would be able to figure out how to capitalize on one's assets, may they come in the form of excellent vocal chords or in her case, mammary glands.

Incidentally, "Booba" did quite well at the tills. It was not unusual to see a cross-section of society laughing and enjoying Rufa Mae's natural flair for comedy (not to mention her bountiful assets). Rufa Mae brought the house down just by saying "okay, okay."

This self-confessed former tomboy (she used to be boyish and was an "expert" at street games, "Chinese garter," especially) says she leads a very simple life outside of show biz and would rather sit in small cafés and sip a cup of coffee than go discoing. Indifferent to those who find her "cheap," she takes comfort in the fact that she is "not stepping on anyone's toes" in her quest for success.

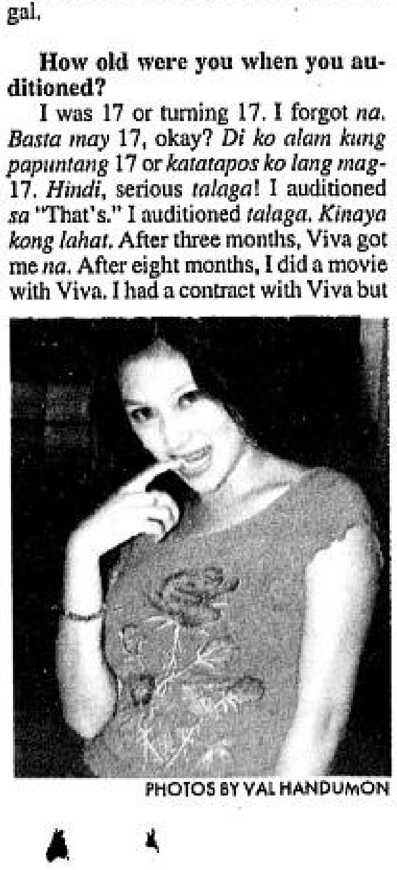
From the moment she auditioned in "That's Entertainment" in 1995 to "Booba," Rufa Mae has projected a sexy nubile image. Yes, she is all that and much more in person.

So what sets her apart from other nymphets? It may be because her image is a quaint mixture of sexiness and naivete. It could also be that she has paid her dues and found her own niche in show biz. Although we laugh at her antics, it may be that the joke is on us.

It may very well be that despite the sexy vavavoom image, she is not at all a sleazy slut. This "Booba" is one smart gal.

How old were you when you auditioned?

I was 17 or turning 17. I forgot *na. Basta may* 17, okay? *Di ko alam kung papuntang* 17 or *katatapos ko lang mag*-17. *Hindi*, serious *talaga*! I auditioned *sa* "That's." I auditioned *talaga. Kinaya kong lahat.* After three months, Viva got me *na*. After eight months, I did a movie with Viva. I had a contract with Viva but at that time I was just a talent, *parang* extra *ang dating*. So *mga* one day *lang* or two days. After that I got a full contract and did "Indecent Professor" with Leo Martinez. I was with Amanda Page, Glydel Mercado. That was my first full-length movie. *Pero sa* movie *na yun parang sa* background *lang ako*. My first solo starrer, my launching movie was "Gloria, Gloria Labandera." Before that I did "Kool Ka Lang," we were five girls in that movie. Among the five girls in that movie, I was the one given a launching movie. After that I became a favorite leading lady of the actors with Viva.



PHOTOS BY VAL HANDUMON

How long have you been in the business?

Mga five years.

You're...

I'm 22. Tama 17 [*ako* when I started]. (Laughter)

Let's talk about "Booba." We watched that.

Thank you so much for supporting.

A lot of our friends watched it.

Talaga? Thank you. Without you guys, I'm nothing. In fairness *gusto ko lang pasalamatan lahat ng* high-class society friends, *mga coño* supporters. *Diyos ko, day, aminin natin, ha. Kumbaga* A-D *ang nag-suporta..*

Yeah, we agree with you!

Grabe, na-touch *naman ako*! *Mga* friends, try *ko pa naman maki*-level *sa inyo! Alam nyo! Huy, sulat mo 'yan ha! Kailangan malaman nila, ng lahat ng sosyal kong* friends, *mga* supporters, thank you *talaga sa pagtitiwala. Alam n'yo* try *ko talaga maki*-level. *Pero* try *lang*! For a change!

The movie was so funny without even trying too hard.

'Yun na nga, eh. Di naman kasi ako nagpapatawa, eh.

Like *'yung nasa bangka ka, tapos* three years after, project *pa rin.*

Or *'yung nasunog 'yung* house, *ay pinasunog 'yung* house.

Kahit buhay pa 'yung si lola.

Yah! *Tsaka 'yung sa mga* love scenes *namin ni* Gary (Estrada) *na halos na*-possess *na ako. At di ko nakayanan 'yung* ending *kasi parang walang* love. *Kinailangan ng* theme song. *Hindi ko nakayanan kaya* I asked for a theme song. I was telling them, theme song *naman dyan*! *Walang* background music, *walang nagbigay ng* theme song. *Eh, di kinanta ko na lang ang* theme song. *O di ba nabuo ang* movie! *Eh, di nabuo ko 'yung* movie *sa lahat nang makakaya ko*! Of course, with the help of my costars Ai Ai de Las Alas, Gina Pareño.

Did you enjoy making the movie?

Yah! Sometimes *nga* during the shooting I would almost end up laughing myself. I can't help it *talaga*! *Eh* our director, Joyce Bernal, *sinasakyan ang kabibahan ko*. She let us do what we wanted to do.

How do you feel you are beginning to have a huge following?

Hay, thanks *talaga*! *Buti magkaalam na, di ba*? Anyways, I have an album. I want to remind everybody, *baka magkalimutan*. If they appreciated "Booba," I also have the songs from "Rated R." *Huy, bilihin n'yo naman. Magaganda naman 'yung* songs, *tsaka may boses naman ako kahit papano*, okay? *Punong-puno ako ng emosyon sa* album *na 'yun* when I was making it *kaya magugustuhan nila 'yun*.

Let's talk about something else. Like I told you, this interview is coming out for our Sex issue. I was just wondering, how did you learn about sex?

Ay, eh, bata pa ako I knew already that *kaya nagkakaroon ng* baby because of the mother and the father...

Who explained to you about that?

Walang nag-explain. *Alam mo, di ko na rin maalala. Di ko rin kasi tipong mini*-memorize or *natandaan kung sino nagsabi* or *nagturo. 'Yung tipong tatanawin ko na utang na loob*. (Laughter) *Basta alam ko lang. Kayo*, do you know?

I don't really remember, too. Maybe from a book.

Ah, now I remember! *'Yung* when the sperm cell and the egg cell unite, *di ba*?

THE VAMP/ p.D2

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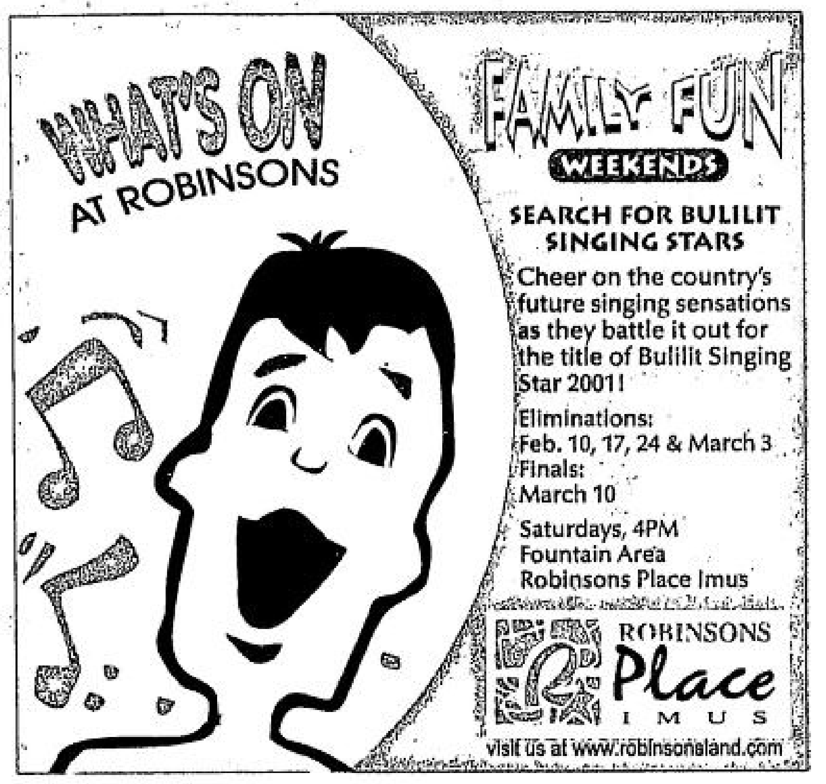

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The vamp is a riot

(From page D1)

Ah, so you learned it from school!

Fetus *ba 'yung sagot dun? Siguro nga sa* school *nag*-start. *S'yempre* when you're a kid, *di mo pa kine*-care *masyado yang mga bagay na 'yan.* Care *mo ba d'yan, di ba? Pero* definitely *alam mong* you came from your mom. *Pag nagkaisip-isip ka na nang konti nalalaman mo 'yan. Pero 'yung mga* penetration *chuva, di mo alam! Ah basta, lahat ng tao alam 'yun.*

What was the first Rated R movie you ever saw?

Kasi, you know what, *nu'ng mga araw na 'yun, nu'ng bata-bata pa ako, di ako mahilig manuod ng mga ganu'ng* movies. *Kakahiya.* (Sincerely) *Nahihiya ako sa sarili ko, 'yung gan'un. Siguro* it was okay, *pero parang di ko talaga* feel. *Siguro mga* high school *na* when I saw one *pero 'yung mga napanuod ko 'yung mga* kiss-kiss *lang*, boobs *lang pero wala 'yung bastos-bastos, wala 'yung grabe talaga.*

When was your first kiss?

Uhmm, I think I was 14.

Was it with your boyfriend or was it a stolen kiss or...

Well, *muntik ng maging* boyfriend. *Di ba? Wala lang, parang* M.U. *lang* or crush *mo lang. Parang* on-*onan ang dating pero hanggang yakapan lang.*

How did you feel?

I felt guilty. Feeling *ko ang landi ko na.* It wasn't a torrid kiss. It was just a lips-to-lips kind of kiss *pero medyo matagal.* So *s'yempre* feeling *ko nagi*-guilty *ako*. I was scared. I didn't know so much at that time. *Parang* just like when you first get your period. *Di mo akalain, di ba? Kala mo may sugat ka lang.*

Is your family conservative?

Super conservative!

How do they feel you have a sexy image?

Alam mo, 'yung sexy *naman kasi nag*-start *naman ako* slowly. They have gotten used to me accepting mature roles. *Alam naman nila* they can trust me. When I was still in school, *nag-i*-excel *naman ako, eh. Kaya lang ako nag*-"That's" *kasi napabarkada ako nu'ng* fourth year high school *ako* so my grades went down. It was my *lola* who put me to school so *s'yempre nahiya talaga ako at di ko nakayanan. S'yempre may utang na loob ka so ayaw mong maka*-hurt. I also wanted to help my family. *Di naman kami sobrang naghihirap pero s'yempre gusto kong tumulong.*

But you're close to everyone?

Yup, as a matter of fact, we all live together. Of course, my stepsiblings with my father live in separate quarters. My family knows I have talent. *Tsaka kaya nga ako kailangan mag*-comedy *kasi alam ko 'pag nag*-serious sexy star *ako, baka tiris-tirisin nila ako. Alam mo 'yun, medyo naja*-justify *ko pa, kumbaga nauuto ko pa sila. Siguro 'pag nag*-serious *ako na* sexy star, *'yung medyo tumitirik-tirik na 'yung mata ko, di na nila kaya 'yun.* I'm really just being professional. Even if you ask me *na pa*-tumbling-tumbling. *Sino ba namang matinong babae ang gagawa n'un?* Right in the middle of University Belt where there are thousands of people. I also do action movies. I had movies before where I jumped off a bridge, *nakipagbarilan din ako.* Everything, I can do it as an actress. *'Yun nga lang, di nila ako bigyan ng* chance *na mag*-drama *lang.* Even just once. Of course, I want to do that *pero* I know the right time will come.

What did you want to be when you were growing up?

I wanted to be a lawyer. *'Yung tipong naka*-suit. *'Yung pormal, 'yung naka*- high heels. *Basta kung anuman, basta may* desk! Then when I got older, I wanted to be a stewardess. I never expected *na ito pala mararating ko, walang ka pormal-pormal.* Well, okay *lang* because I'm happy.

How do you balance having a sexy image at the same time you're not "*bastusin*"?

Eto pa, sometimes, I reach that point also *na* I get depressed. *S'yempre kahit papano* when you think about it, *nahihiya ka rin. May kahihiyan ka rin. Pero* it changes when I see the people's reactions. People clap their hands after they see my movie. Like after the movie premiere of "Booba," people genuinely enjoyed the movie and were clapping really hard.

2bU
to be young • to be you • to be young • To be you!

Even during the regular showing, we noticed that people clapped their hands when the movie ended.

O, yan ha, kayo na mismo nagsabi, ha? Madi-depress *pa ba ako? Eh, mismong sila nga di na nila pinansin. Di naman sa nagyayabang ako, pero maganda talaga 'yung* feedback after the movie. *Masaya sila at wala silang masabi. Natuwa sila kahit* for a while and forgot their problems. I've been getting a lot of offers and I'm really happy. Now I have another career (as a comedienne) and I'm back.

Do you plan to go back to school?

I have a lot of plans. I really want to go back to school *pero di ba* they say strike while the iron is hot? *Hindi rin naman nakakahiyang mag*-college *kahit may edad ka na.* Another thing, I don't want to go to school *na wala lang, para lang maka*-attendance, *para masabing may pinag-aralan ka. Gusto ko 'pag nag-aral ako, 'yung may natutunan ako.* A lot of people have graduated *na wala lang.* I'm not saying it's bad *pero* for myself, I really want to take time to learn. *Kasi sayang ang pera, sayang ang pagod.* I make it a point that everything I do, I like what I am doing and that my concentration is there. *Pero* at this point, *di ko kayang gawin lahat.* Hopefully I will finish school. *Ang daming yumaman d'yan na di nakapagtapos, ang daming politiko na di nakapagtapos* and *ang daming nakapag-asawa ng mayaman na di nakapagtapos.* (Laughs) Seriously, try *ko lang talaga.* I really believe in *sipag at tiyaga.*

What's your favorite piece of underwear? Style or brand?

I like the T-back. Brands? St. Michael, Victoria's Secret, Calvin Klein, Polo. For bra, I really like St. Michael. *Pero 'pag* seductiveness *na ang umiiral, syempre* Victoria's Secret. When I feel sporty, I wear Polo or CK. I have different moods, *eh.* Sometimes I feel sporty. Sometimes, *para akong dalagang nakikipag-sosyalan sa mga* hotel. At home, I like wearing cotton underwear. *'Yung tipong* white cotton. *'Yung tipong pang-lola na panty lalo na 'pag matutulog.* Sometimes *nga* I don't wear underwear, shorts *na lang.* It's for hygienic purposes. Sometimes *nga*, I don't wear any *na kasi s'yempre para makapagpahinga kasi* the whole day stressed out.

What's the naughtiest thing you have done or will do for a loved one?

I'm really naughty as a person *naman talaga, eh. Mahilig ako magbiro at magloko. Kaya nga di siguro ako mabastos ng guys kasi inuunahan ko na sila. Inaalaska ko na kaagad sila.*

Have you ever been harassed or disrespected by overeager fans?

Well, I think they get shocked when they see me because *payat pala ako*, cute *pala ako. S'yempre 'pag lumalabas ka, mukhang* fresh *na* fresh *ka, kakaligo mo lang, halos wala kang* makeup. *Eh* flawless *ang* skin, *di ba?* So *ang pagka*-flawless *lumalabas. May mga iba naman na siguro di mapigilan pero* never *pa naman ako nahipuan* or something.

What do you find attractive in a man?

I want someone natural, *ayoko 'yung naka*-gel, *naka*-spraynet *na parang may balakubak.* I want someone fresh-looking. *'Yung mukhang bagong ligo.* I don't want someone who looks oily. I want someone who looks clean. I'm not into really *guapong-guapo na* boys. I want someone who has brains. *Mas maganda kasi 'pag mas may utak 'yung* guy *kaysa sa babae. Siyempre gusto ng lalake na mas* macho *ang dating n'ya. Tsaka* cute *nga ang dating 'pag ang* girl *medyo* naïve *ang dating.*

What for you is the sexiest part of your body?

I would think it's the shape of my body.

Do you go on a diet? Do you love to eat?

No *naman*, I don't go on a diet. Yup, I love to eat. I love pasta.

Do you think love is possible without sex and vice versa?

Love is possible without sex? Of course. Sex without love... *oo din.* You know there are people *na parang chuva lang, kanya-kanyang buhay, di ba?* There are guys who will wait until they get married before they have sex with the girl. I would think there are more people who have sex without love.

How would you explain sex to a 10-year-old kid?

I'd tell the kid *na bastos 'yun.* I'll tell him straight *di dapat muna isipin ng mga batang katulad mo. Pero hindi, siguro 'pag ako may anak na* 10 years old *mas madami nang alam 'yun.* I guess okay *lang malaman* what sex is, *pero 'wag muna nilang gagawin. Huwag lang muna n'ya iisipin at gagawin.*

Premarital sex?

Well, it's *uso.* I don't think I can say I'm totally against that *kasi* I think *mas pangit naman kung magpapakasal ka para lang* to have sex. *Mali naman* if you tell yourself I'll get married *na* so that I can have sex. Of course, *kung maaring iwasan, di ba? Kung kaya bang iwasan*, why not? Okay *naman ang kasal. Du'n din sa mga* against *sa* premarital sex, okay *din naman 'yun eh. Bawal naman kasi talaga, eh.*

Abortion?

Ay, ayoko talaga n'yan. (Grimaces) *Naiiyak ako 'pag nakakakita ako ng* baby. *Alam mo 'yun, 'yung bagong panganak pa lang.* I get really touched when I see newborn babies. They smell so good and their smell stays with you. You know, when they're still peeling, *naiiyak talaga ako* when I see them.

Sexiest male actor? Local and foreign.

Pwede bang sexiest male athlete *na lang? S'yempre naman si* Rudy Hatfield.

Speaking of Rudy, what do you call each other?

Baby.

E-mail the author at jules26@gurlmail.com

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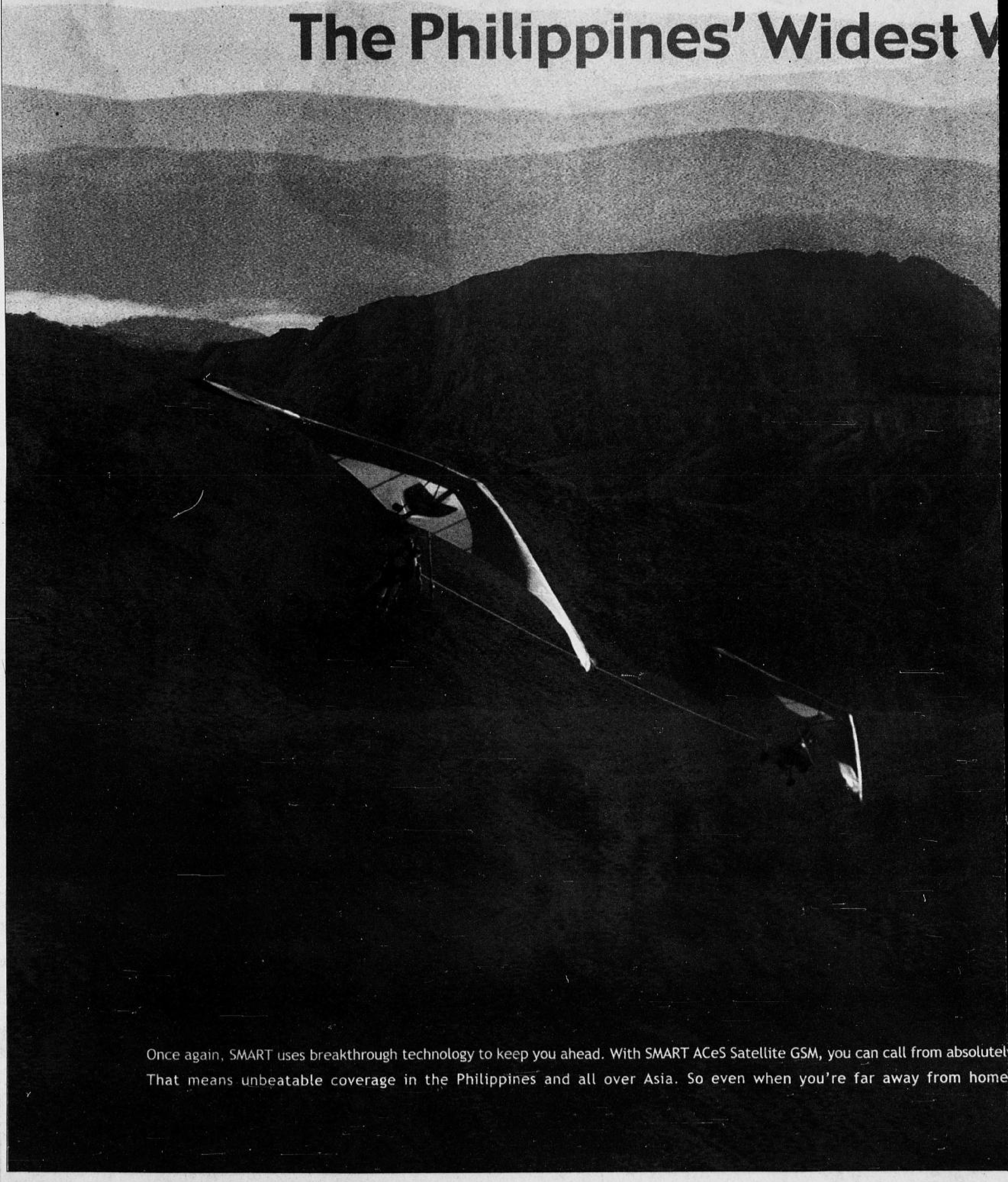

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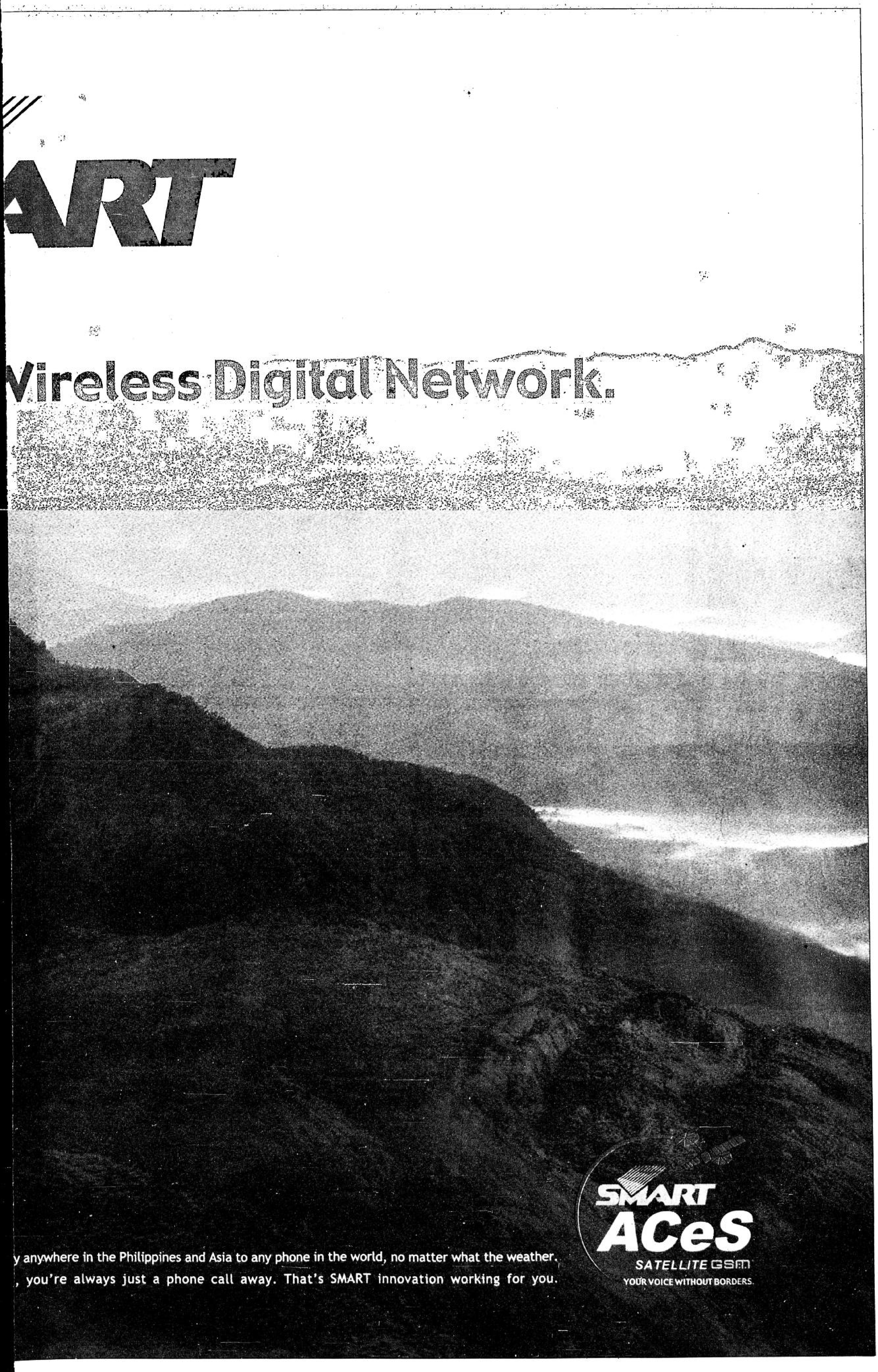
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There's something about teen sex flicks

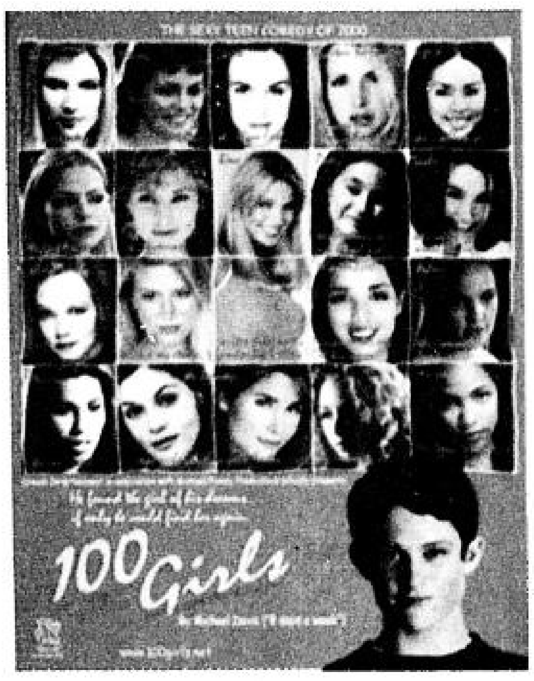
A spate of American movies treating sex and illicit matters with casual candor and a little bit of sleaze won a sizeable audience in the Philippines and parents are quite jittery

By Pam Pastor

EYEBROWS down, parents. We're not talking about porn. We are referring to the phenomenon sweeping the movie industry the past several years—teen sex flicks.

Noticeably, Hollywood film companies have been creating more and more teenage movies that deal with sex. This shouldn't be surprising, actually, since this is the age when most kids forget about "the garden and the flower" that their parents used as safe metaphors to explain sex.

In the past years, movies have become more and more direct, treating sex lightly, most of the time as a source of laughter. Masturbation and even oral sex have hit the big screen without being sleazy, without leaving a bad taste in the mouth.


THE SEXY TEEN COMEDY OF 2000
100 Girls

'American Pie'

Five high school boys decide they want to turn into "real men." So they make a pact: they will lose their virginity before graduation. The movie takes its audience on a sidesplitting, blush-inducing, roller-coaster ride that lasts for more than an hour. And who wouldn't get red in the face? Most of my male friends admit they can totally relate to the story. Some of them even claimed to see themselves in the characters. Major memory fest.

The guys take different routes in their attempt to get laid—a dose of sensitivity, a little rumor-mongering, a sharpening of techniques, etc. And a lot of the attempts result in the most embarrassing situations.

The movie isn't only about sex; it's about friendship, love and parent-children relationships. And the good thing about it is that the values aren't shoved down your throat in a mushy package. They are subliminal messages that actually touch you while you're laughing to your heart's content.

Starring a lot of Hollywood's new teen idols, "American Pie" is also eye candy. Yes, watch this movie (I think this will become a classic). Just one tip: don't watch it with your parents. I rented it again last week to refresh my memory and I made the mistake of watching it with my mom. I was cringing by the time the apple pie scene started—it was almost painful to watch.

there's something about mary
WARNING
SPECIAL EDITION
Contains outrageous never-before-seen footage PLUS karaoke music video!
DVD

Virtual Sexuality

'There's Something About Mary'

Okay, so this isn't exactly a teen flick (although Mary, played by Cameron Diaz, and Ted, played by Ben Stiller, were teenagers in the first few scenes). But this movie was a major hit with kids our age.

Ted fell in love with Mary when they were 16. On prom night, Ted got himself stuck in a very unfortunate accident (Guys, you have to be ready for this scene. My brother doubled up when he saw this part) and loses his chance to be with Mary. Thirteen years later, he's still obsessed with the blonde beauty and hires a detective (Matt Dillon) to look her up. The detective falls for Mary, too, and tries everything to have her all to himself. Unfortunately for him and for Ted, all the other guys around Mary are in love with her, too.

"There's Something About Mary" will have you laughing from start to finish. The movie isn't really all about sex, but most of the major scenes have something to do with it. Watch out for the gel scene and the horrifying boob shot.

'Virtual Sexuality'

Once you get over the characters' Spice Girls accent and once you master their English streetspeak, you can actually enjoy this movie. Here's a crash course to help you just a bit: "bloke" means guy, "knickers" means undies, "trainers" are sneakers or rubber shoes and "arse" and "wigglers" mean the same thing—your butt. Now you're ready.

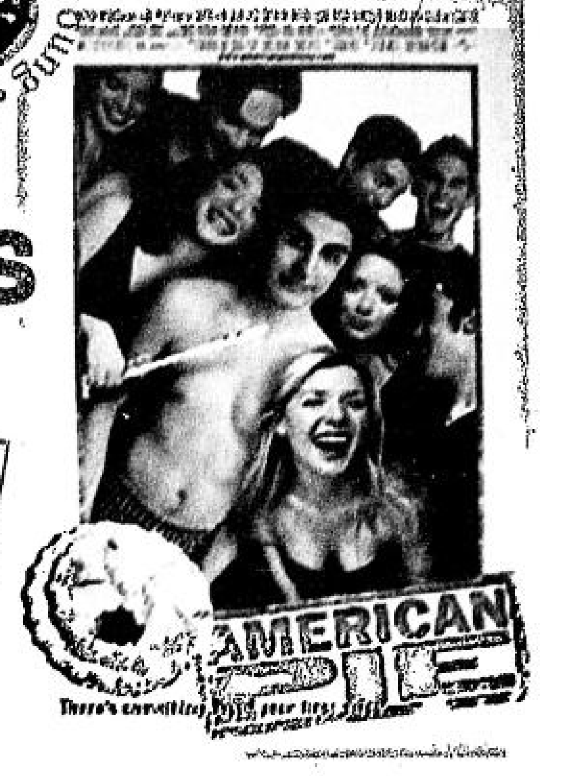
Justine decides that 17 is too old to be a virgin so she tries to find the perfect guy to do it with. Surrounded by jerks and a bunch of lowlifes, she doesn't get lucky, until she wanders into a virtual reality fair (I can't wait 'til Time Zone gets these games. I'm stuck in my Percussion Freaks mode) and finds the Narcissus 1—the "complete 3-dimensional makeover machine." She creates her perfect guy—luscious lips, button nose, baby blues and all—and due to some freak accident, he becomes real. Jake (Mr. Perfect) finds refuge in the home of Chas, Justine's geeky childhood friend. Justine finds herself falling for her creation, although she doesn't know she was the one who created him and that he has her brain. Jake, unfortunately, has set his eyes on Hoover, the community's easy girl. Chas is the one who has the hots for Justine. And if you're not confused enough, to make things even more complicated, the people behind the Narcissus are chasing after Jake, eager to start experimenting on him. (I know, I know, I don't like the sci-fi bit either.)

My best friend refuses to see this movie. "The plot is stupid!" he exclaimed. But I really enjoyed the film. It's light and fun, plus Jake really is a doll. He looks too good to be true.

Just to warn you, this movie has a bit of nudity—don't watch it with your younger siblings. Or if you're hardheaded, keep the remote control handy, just in case.

'Girl' ('American Pie 3'—yeah, right)

"American Pie 3" the cover of this pirated CD announces in big bold letters, although I'm sure the producers of the original "American Pie" have absolutely no idea their hit now has two sequels out in the market. I think it has something to do with Tara Reid being in both movies, in the same way that "Down to You" and "Boys and Girls" were tagged as "She's All That" 2 and 3, respectively, just because Freddie Prinze Jr. starred in all. Stupid, I know. You'd think these pirates would have at least half a brain.



Incidentally, I've also seen "American Pie 2" (I'm not sure what the real title is). It's also a teen sex flick, starring three girls (including an older and much heavier Gabby Hoffman) who look like they've barely passed puberty. "American Pie 2," or whatever its title is, is a drag. Don't waste your time watching it.

I've seen parts of "Girl" in Cinemax or HBO, I'm not sure which. The story revolves around a high school girl, Andrea Marr (Dominique Swain), who is about to graduate. Too bored with her life, she decides to get into the club scene with her friends who are aspiring musicians. This is how she meets Todd Sparrow (Sean Patrick Flannery), a famous rock star, whom she starts pining for. Overnight, Andrea is transformed from little miss student to a full-fledged groupie. She makes a mistake most girls today make—she does everything the guy wants—including giving herself to him, thinking it would get him to stick with her. Andrea misleads herself into believing they actually have a relationship, while Todd keeps blowing her off. You would spend most of the movie rolling your eyes at her idiocy. If that girl were in front of me, I'd slap her to wake her up.

The movie deals with more serious teenage issues—friendship, suicide, decisions and ambition. And it's actually okay, in a "My So-Called Life" kind of way. I just wish they had picked a better girl to play Andrea. It's weird not to side with the protagonist when watching a movie. But I couldn't help it. I just didn't like her.

'Road Trip'

I've seen this movie thrice. The plot is similar to the Paul Rudd and Reese Witherspoon starrer "Overnight Delivery." "OD" just didn't make too much noise and wasn't given enough attention.

"Road Trip," on the other hand, was promoted so well that people were actually eagerly anticipating it weeks before it was shown here. And yes, there was good reason to be excited. This movie is hilarious. Josh Parker (Breckin Meyer—you know, Travis from Alicia Silverstone's "Clueless") and Tiffany Henderson (Rachel Blanchard, the girl who played Cher in the "Clueless" TV series) have been together since they were 5. They went their separate ways in college but they sealed a pact of loyalty. And since Josh hasn't heard from Tiffany for a number of days, he starts thinking she has been cheating on him. Because of this and his friends' twisted guy rules ("It's not cheating if you're in different area codes"; "If you're too wasted to remember, it's not cheating"; "If you can't remember, then it didn't really take place"), he decides that it's okay to do the same.

He hooks up with Beth, a girl who has the hots for him. They videotape their tryst and the tape inadvertently ends up in a package he has asked his roommate to mail to Tiffany. He then finds out Tiffany hasn't been calling because her grandpa has just died. So he drags three of his friends to travel from New York to Texas to get the tape before Tiffany does.

Their road trip is one funny misadventure after another. Josh's three friends Rubin, E.L. and Kyle are funny. Tom Green, one of their friends and the narrator, is also a hit.

Watch this movie with your friends. You'll be laughing nonstop.

The greatest college tradition of all.
ROAD TRIP

'100 Girls'

I have to admit, when "100 Girls" was shown here in Manila, I waved it off as just another stupid film. A lot of people did. Watching it changed my mind. Big surprise, but it turned out to be a really good movie. Matt, played by a geeky-looking Jonathan Tucker, gets stuck in an elevator with a girl when a blackout occurs. They end up doing the horizontal tango. When he comes to, the girl to whom he has lost his virginity is gone. He finds her panties in the laundry basket. Like Prince Charming, he starts searching for his Cinderella, with no glass slipper in tow, only undies. He finds ways to sneak into the girls' dorm every day and finds himself getting close to the females.

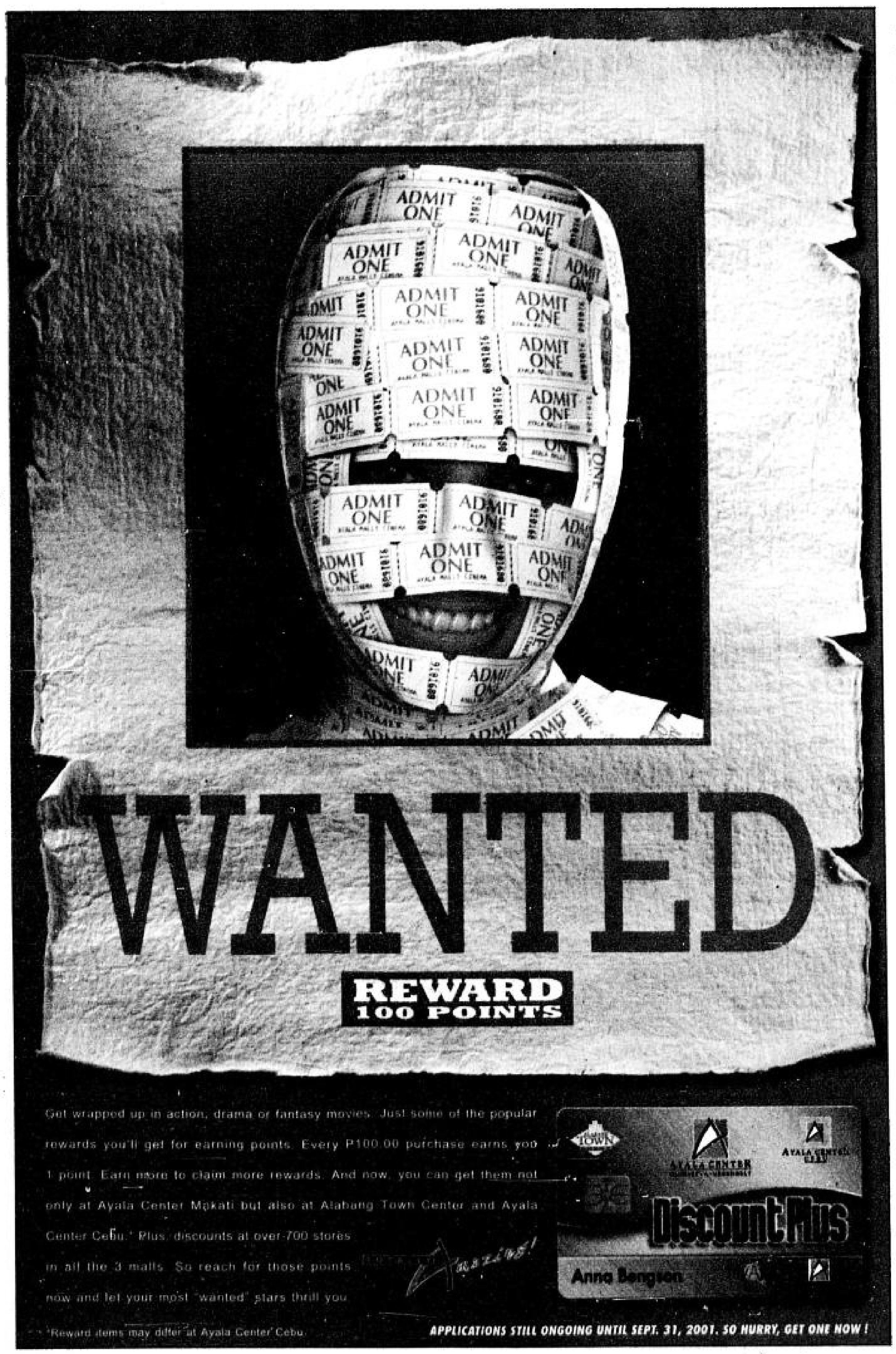
Matt's search, which is futile in the beginning, turns out to be more than just that. It is a journey that helps him understand the opposite sex—and his own gender. "Men have this anti-intimacy force field around them that's powered by sarcasm, humor and aversion," he explains. And he takes his whole audience along with him on the trip. What starts as a sex flick later becomes an intuitive look at men, women and their coexistence on this planet. "Women can go to a store and circle and circle something and they won't even buy it. They're learning self-restraint. Men, on the other hand, only go shopping when we know exactly what we're gonna get. Men and women treat sex the exact same way."

The movie is deep. I'm actually hunting for a copy of the script now. I'm sure if we saw this film earlier, Matt's loooooong speech in front of the 100 girls would have ended up on Jules' list of most romantic movie lines. Here's another quote from the movie: "There's a certain way a man stares at the woman he loves. The man looks like a boy on his birthday. He treats the woman as if it were a gift he's waited so long to open and now he can't wait to see what treasure is inside."

Okay, so this film can be considered a "chick flick." But I'm sure guys would love it, too. Since it has Katherine Heigl, Larisa Oleynik, Emmanuelle Chriqui and almost a hundred other girls on the screen, who wouldn't?

The sequel, "100 Women," is in the works. I can't wait to see it.

E-mail the author at p-a-m-m-y@gurlmail.com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Safe Sex 101

Pick your choice before you do it

YOU'VE made your decision. But you need to get protected. You wouldn't want to get pregnant or catch a disease, would you? It's a cliché all right, but remember—it's better to be safe than sorry.

There's no need to be nervous. Here's a list of the different forms of contraceptives available in the market.

The pill

Oral contraceptives contain two synthetic female hormones (estrogen and progesterone) which prevent pregnancy by inhibiting the monthly release of the "egg" from the ovaries. These are the same female hormones you normally produce. The quantities in the pill are less than what your body will produce if you are pregnant. It prevents ovulation in most women. Therefore, in addition to its contraceptive action it also eliminates mid-cycle pain, which some women experience with ovulation. It also offers medical benefits such as decreased menstrual cramps and heavy bleeding, regulation of periods, and because of the decreased bleeding, reduced anemia. It also provides protection against endometrial and ovarian cancer.

Oral contraceptives are almost 100 precent effective when taken correctly. To be absolutely safe, you should use a second form of contraception the first seven days of the first cycle. Check with your gynecologist before you start taking the pill.

An important reminder: birth control pills do not protect a woman from getting sexually transmitted diseases.

Condom

Let's pretend you don't know this. The male condom is a thin sheath made of latex rubber or animal membrane, and it fits over the man's erect penis. To be most effective, it must be in place before the penis comes into contact with or enters the vagina (since pre-ejaculatory fluids carry both sperm and disease) and it must be carefully removed immediately after ejaculation. None of the semen should be allowed to come into contact with the vagina as the condom is being removed.

Other than a vasectomy, the condom is the only available method of birth control used by men. The condom acts as a mechanical barrier against the sperm, keeping it from coming into contact with the inside of the vagina and therefore from reaching the egg. Similarly, the condom prevents disease-causing organisms from coming into contact with a non-infected partner's skin. Until recently, the condom was used only by men. A female condom is now available.

The female condom works roughly the same way, except that it fits inside the vagina with an inner ring over the cervix and an outer ring over the vulva. This keeps the condom from being pushed up into the vagina, and puts a protective covering over the vagina, preventing sperm from coming into contact with the area.

Injection

The birth control shot contains a medicine called Depo-Provera, a hormone much like the progesterone a woman produces during the last two weeks of each monthly cycle. It stops the woman from releasing an egg and provides other contraceptive effects. Many clinics recommend that you use a backup method of birth control for a week after your first shot. Among typical couples who initiate use of Depo-Provera, about three in 1,000 will experience an accidental pregnancy in the first year.

Diaphragm

The diaphragm is a rubber disk which the woman places in her vagina so that it covers her cervix, the opening to the uterus.

The diaphragm blocks the man's semen from entering the cervix. A spermicide placed in the diaphragm kills sperm and physically blocks the cervix. Among typical couples who initiate the use of the diaphragm, about 20 percent will experience accidental pregnancy in the first year. If the diaphragm is used consistently and correctly, about 6 percent will become pregnant. You must be fitted for a diaphragm in a clinician's office. Be sure you are shown how to insert and remove the diaphragm. You will be given a prescription for the specific type of diaphragm you will use. You must go to a drugstore to get the actual diaphragm and the spermicide to use with the diaphragm.

IUD

For up to seven days after unprotected intercourse, you can have an intrauterine device (IUD) inserted to keep you from getting pregnant. When used after unprotected sex, the Copper T 380 A IUD is inserted into the uterus. It prevents implantation of a fertilized egg.

Emergency contraceptive pill (Morning-after pill)

ECPs are two large doses of ordinary birth control pills. Within 72 hours after unprotected intercourse, you can take emergency contraceptive pills to avoid becoming pregnant. A drug to prevent nausea is often taken as well.

Withdrawal

When the man senses that he is about to reach climax, he pulls out and ejaculates outside of the vagina. Since sperm is not deposited in the vagina, no fertilized egg is formed. This method offers no real protection—better be sure and get a real contraceptive.

Contraceptive foam

Foam is a vaginal spermicide which is placed into the woman's vagina using an applicator. It has two contraceptive effects: it kills or destroys sperm (which is why it is called "spermicidal") and it prevents sperm from reaching the egg by blocking the opening to the cervical canal.

Among typical couples who initiate use of vaginal spermicides, about 25 percent will experience an accidental pregnancy in the first year. If vaginal spermicides are used consistently and correctly, about 6 percent of couples will become pregnant.

Aside from these methods, a lot of people today choose to use the rhythm method, although this is never 100 percent reliable, not unless you are blessed with a regular period. Before deciding on a form of contraceptive, check with your gynecologist. Your doctor will know which method will be the best for you—although a lot of people say that abstinence is still the safest sex there is.

Deciding to start having sex is a big step. Learn from the mistakes of others. Never forget the responsibilities sex carries with it.

Source: http://www.nau.edu/~fronske/bcp.html, http://www.atfloydian.u-net.com/alt-contraceptives/home.htm, http://www.emory.edu/WHSC/MED/FAMPLAN/choices.html, www.contraception.net

Pam Pastor

To lose or not to lose it

Two guys offer their quirky thoughts on the 21st century eccentricity—virginity

Realism vs. idealism

BY FRANCO CRUZ MABANTA
2bU! Correspondent

SO when does a guy decide that it's time to dive for home base? When does a girl tell herself that she wants her curiosity satisfied? To the members of Gen-X, when is the time to say bye-bye to virginity?

That single, solitary moment—that "first time"—for each of us marks an immutable, indisputable change in our lives. For some, it is the everlasting change of status (either from being pure to being dirty or from being uncool to being experienced). For others, it's simply sheer spine-tingling fun—the union of two warm bodies in ecstasy.

But the thing that we are all sure about is the fact that we are given virginity and the opportunity to keep it. What's different though is the way we look at it. We know that once we do the deed, we'll never be the same again. We will lose something and we will gain something.

We all know that Filipino culture is on a level of wholesomeness far higher than that of the West. The result: fewer babies, more virgins, and the owner of Trust condom asking himself why he didn't set his business up in France instead.

But I'm sure you'll all agree with me when I say that it would take blind man with no ears not to know that sexual activity in this country, particularly among teenagers, has become more frequent. Generation X has definitely been readjusting the average age when people decide to get it on under the sheets for the first time. Most of us laughed our heads off instead of flinching in disgust after hearing this line from "American Pie": "My friends call me Nova. As in, Casanova. Suck me, beautiful."

The liberals like doing it because it feels great. They will tell you that that's the way God wanted it to be. He made sure our bodies would tingle and our toes would curl up and the hair on the back of our necks would stand every time we do it. He made it desirable—and the liberals like it that way. That's why virginity is valued a lot less from their point of view. It's a tiny obstacle on the way to a great time anytime with anyone. And it doesn't matter whether you're male or female, young or old, dwarflike or a giant. The craving is always there.

That craving though doesn't justify everything. The Gen-X conservative places more value in virginity, saying that keeping it is the right thing to do. To them, sex is a good thing but one has to follow the element of time. Marriage first, sex later. Why? Because God said so. I think that's a pretty good answer. When you decide to lose your virginity to a guy or a girl you are not married to, you defy His will. I'm no expert but I do know that that's not a good thing. Instead of lines from "American Pie" ringing in their ears, they recall the poetry from Gladiator: "What you do in life echoes throughout eternity."

The liberals invoke realism. Having sex before marriage is definitely the more common experience. But can you really go against God's word?

I asked two very different friends who preach their messages about virginity to the public. One said, "Keep fighting the temptation, keep holding onto it. Just think of God and that should be enough." The other, "Sex is good. Go for it. Thank me afterwards." You decide.

Between easy and hard

BY MICHAEL R.
2bU! Correspondent

IN THIS world, virginity is a concept that is considered to be either the most important or the most useless thing. So important that there are those who would actually fight and die to keep theirs intact (yes, people like those actually exist, how many they are only God knows).

Then of course there's the majority. I'm talking about the people who treat virginity like a disease and have this belief that losing it is always better than keeping it. Regardless, there are only two categories of people when it comes to virginity. Those who want to keep it, those who don't care.

For those who don't care, it's not really surprising. Who in his right mind would turn down a chance for an hour or three of intense and passionate fun? Technically we were created with urges and wouldn't acting on these urges be the most normal thing to do, the most human? Aren't the scary religious people the only ones who are opposed to our being as human as we could be?

Call it the pleasure principle. Think with your body, act with your body. Plain and simple. But to conservatives, virginity is a faith. They believe in the sacredness of keeping oneself intact. To them, virginity has something to do with personal integrity. You're either whole or someone has taken a piece of you. Who better to take a piece of you than the person you want to spend the rest of your life with?

Simple? Quite. Easy? No. Keeping one's virginity is a struggle because one has to wait until the right one comes along. If you cherish it, you'll keep it around long enough until the person who matters most to you comes along. If you don't really care, you lose it faster than you can say Durex.

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When the lines are burning, really burning

By Kristensen

Phone sex is for the bored, the reckless—and the feckless?

"BORED *ka na ba*?" This line was a hit a few years back when a regional phone company used the come-on in its entertainment service television ad. Back then, different TV programs featured people, teenagers in particular, who got hooked on this service, blowing up their phone bills just to talk to someone they didn't know. The hype is well done and over with, but I don't think the habit of calling a stranger at night has stopped. I should know, I'm one of them.

Like many others, I find evenings too boring to handle that I have to trust a stranger to give me some kind of entertainment. And not just any ordinary entertainment. We don't just talk about the weather, school and what our day was like—I have my friends for that. We talk about something else, something that I need to conspiratorially whisper about with my mate, if I don't want a major lecture from mom. We talk about sex.

So, what exactly happens during phone sex? It's not like guys insert *their* apparatus in *the* apparatus. Think of it this way: if that's the way phone sex worked, how gross would it be for the girls? Simply, it means talking about sexual fantasies over the phone while they play with themselves. It's not different from masturbation, except that someone is doing it with you on the other end of the line.

Now, before you go and dial people's numbers at random (which is not advisable in the first place), you should be reminded of the ugly side of phone sex. It's not all pretty, nice and memorable. Yeah, it can be memorable but not for a good reason. There are some guys who can be very sleazy, who would make you do things more fitting for "Animal Planet." They want you to groan like some female gorilla in distress and call out their names at the same time. Others want to specifically describe everything that they're doing until you fall asleep.

If only I had a lot of money, I would enrol most of the guys in language school. Just the way they say, "*Hilo*?" instead of "hello" sends me to hysteric laughter. Or when they go, "*Whatcha dowing now, bebe*?" the next thing they'd certainly hear would be a busy tone—or me laughing loudly. Wrong grammar can sometimes be understandable, unless they tell me that they're Fil-Americans but sound otherwise. There are a lot more things that one can find funny when having phone sex that sometimes I wonder if I'm in it for the amusement.

However, when everything's going fine, and when I feel like I've found a perfect match, there'd be another problem: making sure we don't get caught. In my case, it can be a problem especially because I share a room with someone. I need to wait until everyone's asleep in the family so I can do it with my phone mate. There'd be times when I have to occasionally check myself if my "ooohs" and "aaahs" are getting louder and reaching my parent's bedroom. If I'm free, however, it's the guy who's got the problems. It could be such a turnoff when I hear his mom go, "*Hoy, bumili ka muna diyan sa tindahan*," or "*Babad ka nang babad sa telepono, puro bagsak naman ang grades mo*!" He would quickly shift to another topic, ask about our "school project" or something else.

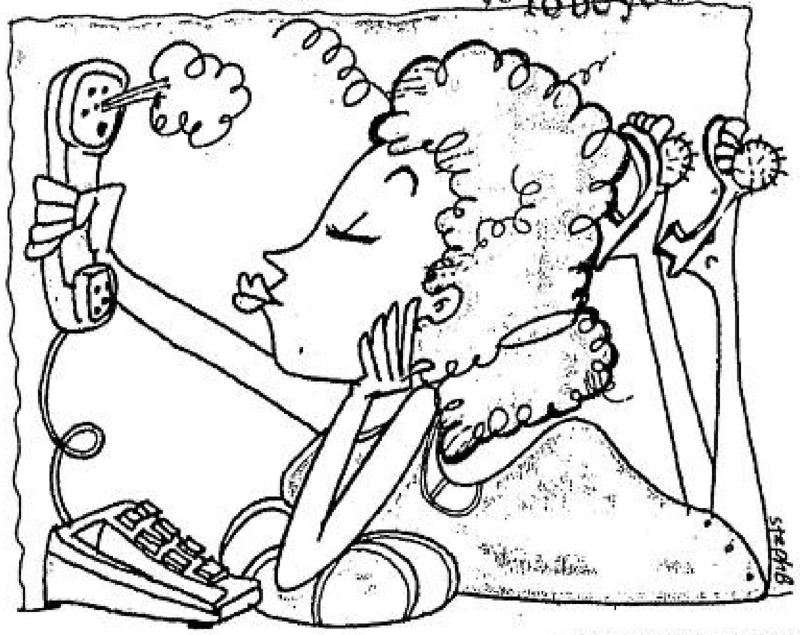


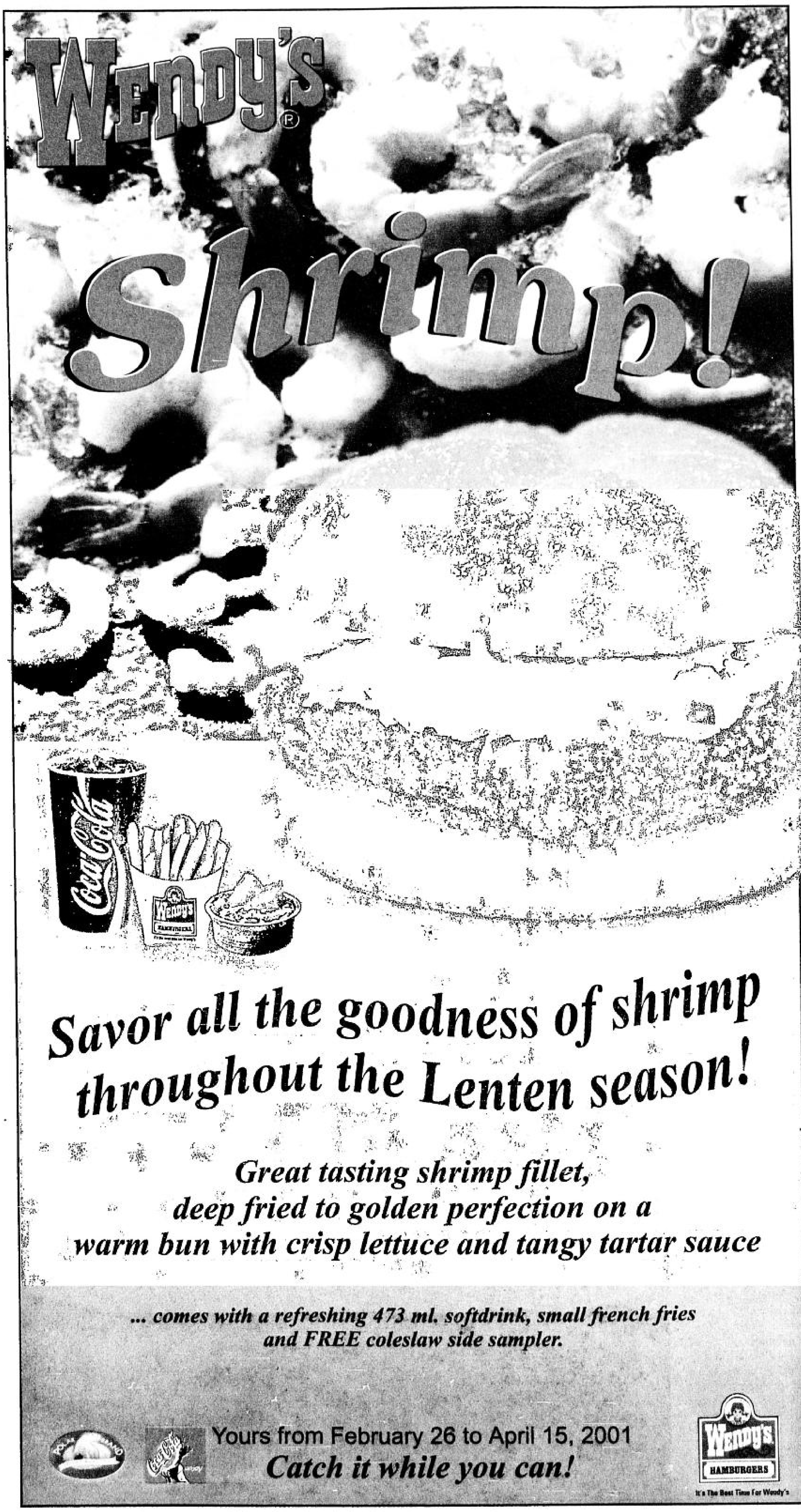
ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

The problem with having phone sex with guys is that once you call them back, it'd be pretty hard to have a decent conversation with them again. Once they get to hear your voice, they're going to start breathing heavily you will think they have asthma. Also, sometimes the conversation can be quite monotonous. Even the sex part itself can be monotonous. And when you start discussing other issues, you find them not being able to talk. It makes you wonder if sex is really all there is on their minds.

Once you do get to find someone who's perfect, there's still something worth considering: Is he stalker material? I learned my lesson when I first gave my number to a guy. What he wanted was beyond phone sex; he wanted a relationship. But you must still consider the anonymity of the guy you're talking to. Just because you are having fun having phone sex doesn't mean you intend to go to bed with him, much less have a serious relationship. In the end, you must be able to recognize the fact that phone sex is still pretty much a fantasy that doesn't necessarily need to be lived out. It can only be fun depending on who's a part of it.

To have or not to have phone sex. It's your call.

Email the author at Kristensen20@yahoo.com



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'Tanging Yaman' the book, to be launched

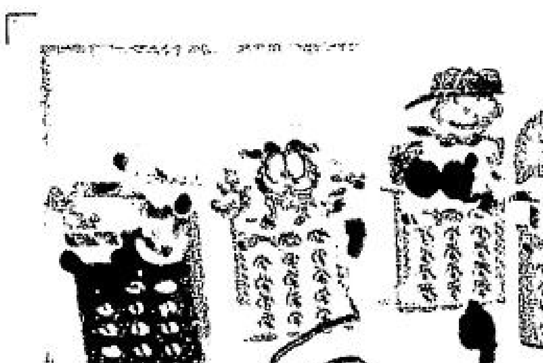
ANVIL Publishing Inc., with ABS-CBN Consumer Products, will launch the book complement to Star Cinema's award-winning film, "Tanging Yaman," on March 3 at Function Room A of the Megatrade Hall, 5/F SM Megamall Building B.

The book includes the final screenplay and extensive notes from director-screenwriter Laurice Guillen, Star Cinema line producer Elma Medua and the two other screenwriters, Raymond Lee and Shaira Salvador. The launch will be exclusively for mass communications and film students and professors who will listen and interact with Guillen, the screenwriters and other members of the cast and production team.

"Tanging Yaman," the film, won nine awards during the recent Manila Film Festival, notably Best Festival Picture, Best Festival Director, Best Original Story and Screenplay and Best Actor and Actress. It was also given an "A," the highest film rating given by the Film Ratings Board. It was also cited as Best Film by the Young Critics Circle this month.

In her foreword, Star Cinema executive producer Malou Santos describes the film "As one of the best inspirational films about the courage and resilience of the Filipino family, 'Tanging Yaman' boasts of a strong story concept. How this story came to life and made its way onto paper and then to film is what this book is all about. Guillen and her cowriters give us a glimpse of the creative process involved in the translation of the story concept into a screenplay. Magical and glamorous as filmmaking seems, line producer Elma Medua gives us an idea of just how much hard work and patience—and just how much of a budget—it took to make this vision a reality."

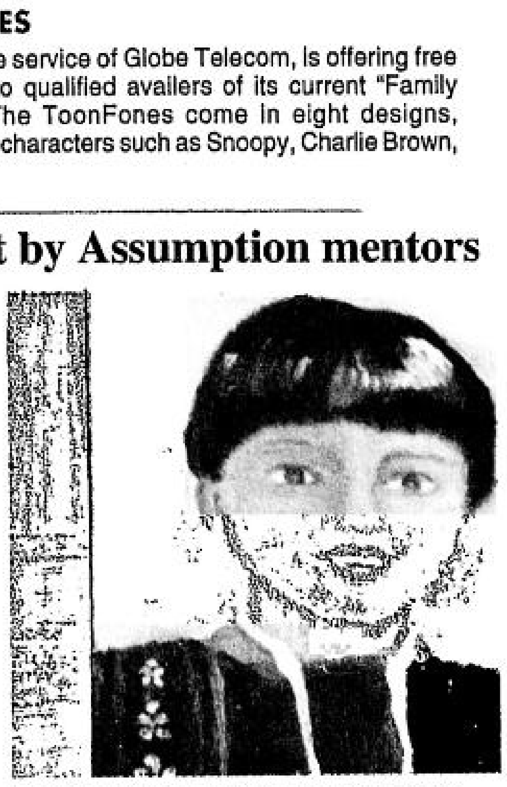
Call Gilda Rovillos of Anvil Publishing at 914-1455 or 671-9235. Although admission is free, the number of seats is limited.



GLOBE TOONFONES
Globelines, the telephone service of Globe Telecom, is offering free hands-free ToonFones to qualified availers of its current "Family Connections" promo. The ToonFones come in eight designs, featuring popular cartoon characters such as Snoopy, Charlie Brown, Garfield and Dilbert.

Painting exhibit by Assumption mentors

THE PAINTING Club of the high school department of the Assumption College will hold the exhibit "Splat!" on March 3-31 at Bistro 110 at 110 Palanca St., Legaspi Village, Makati. The club's moderators are Rachelle Lansangan, Clarissa Olizon Chikiamco and Krisha Marie Lu Fabia. Call Ms Chikiamco at 851-7208 and 631-3121.



"STARTLED CHILD" by Clarissa Olizon Chikiamco

For feedback or suggestions ls_2bu@inquirer.com.ph

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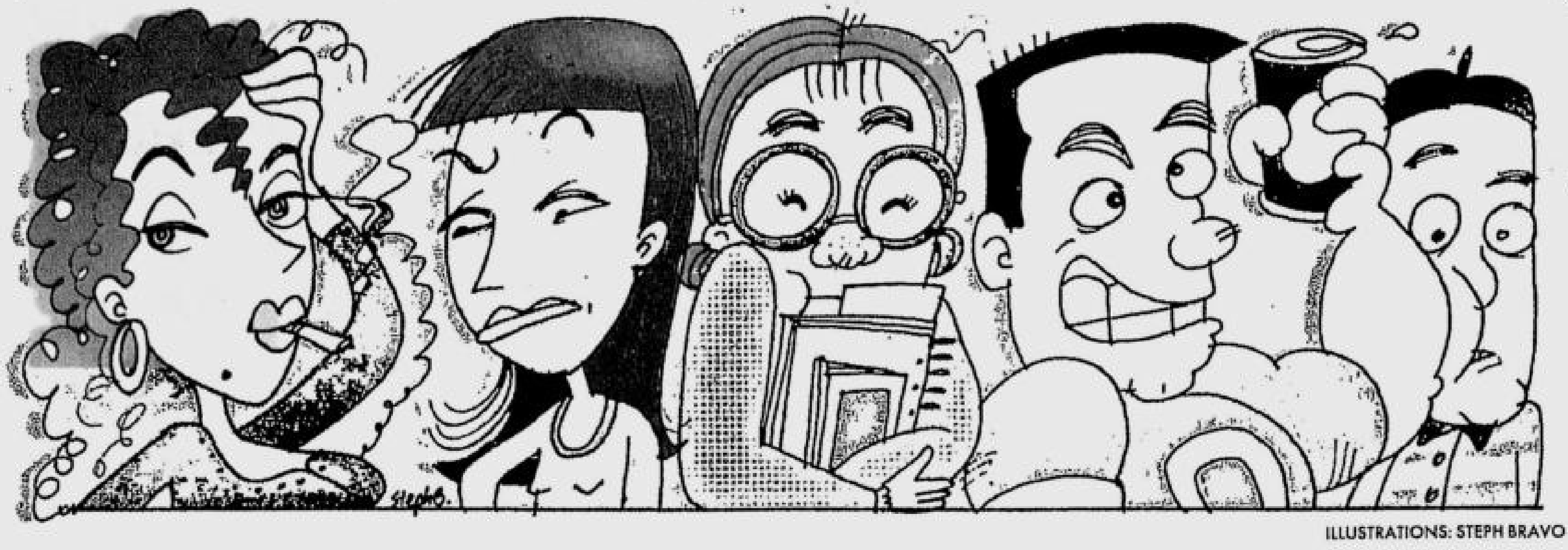

ILLUSTRATIONS: STEPH BRAVO

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The P-Files

ADMIT it. Just one look at a person and you immediately put him or her in a box. Geek. Loser. Brain-dead jock. Bimbo. Slut. Labels. There always has to be a label. Sometimes, we get too caught up with the name-calling that we forget about the real people behind the image.

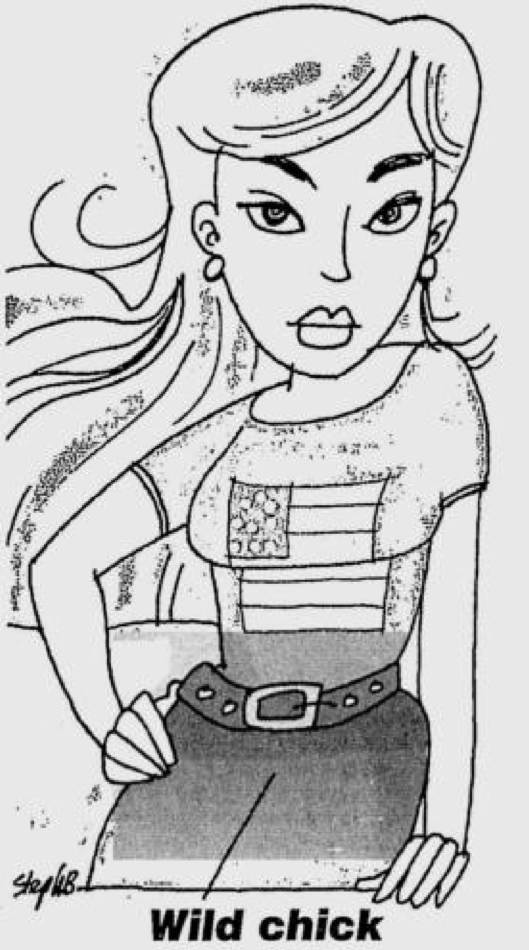
You probably remember her. Back in high school, she was one of the first people who started wearing bras. She developed way before you did, starting to look like a young lady while the rest of you remained as flat as little boys. She left behind her pigtails and started fixing herself up more.

And then you heard that (gasp!) boys were calling her—and that she was actually dating them. The wheels in your dirty little mind started turning. She was probably doing it! And you told your friends what you think. And they told their friends. Pretty soon, the pretty little miss would be hounded by rumors about her and the nasty things she had been doing.

You didn't know if they were true, you just kept on telling the stories you heard again and again—without thinking about how she would feel. You told your friends things like, "She'll probably get pregnant before we all graduate from college." When you felt pangs of guilt, when you thought of the possibility she could actually be a nice person and how you never gave her a chance, you dismissed it and convinced yourself that she was exactly what you said—just a slut.

But what goes on in the mind of people who've been marked with the stamp of promiscuity? Do they get affected when people call them easy? Do they think it's unfair that people say that they would spread their legs at the snap of a finger? 2bU! gives you a closer look:

> Promiscuous company. They are the gays and the girls who are the subjects of the sleaziest gossips. Some are guilty, some not



Wild chick

OKAY, so I'm like your normal 21-year-old Fil-Am-girl from Texas, USA. I came back to the Philippines about 2½ years ago for college. Let me just tell you how I really hate it when people automatically assume I'm promiscuous just because I came from the US. Just because I have blonde streaks in my hair and talk in slang doesn't mean I'm promiscuous.

I understand why they think that way. I guess it's the way teenagers in the US live their lives. It's a wild and crazy party life, actually. When I was in Texas, I was part of the cheerleading squad. We'd have our regular parties every Friday night after the football game. Of course, I'd have my share of alcohol, but I didn't drink that much since I would always have to drive home. Most of the time, I was the designated driver of my friends. They were pretty wild at parties. Let me just tell you that what you see in the teen movies is nothing. When people get drunk there, they take their clothes off and do stuff with guys who aren't even their boyfriends.

"Doin' it" with whoever you're going out with or whoever you want is the "in" thing in

THE P-FILES/ p.E4

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Not just another 'One'

By Cheryl Tiu and Tammy David
2bu! Correspondents

WHEN 2bu!'s in-demand music writer Maui Reyes texted us to interview Plus One, we almost dropped our cell phones. We had to accept the assignment since we're just starting out as journalists and we can't choose what we want to do. Besides, we are notoriously known in our school as rockers.

We had the opportunity to catch Plus One at the MTV launch at The Fort on Feb. 17, but we wondered why there was a fifth member… oh we get it, it's Plus One.

The day of the interview finally came. We thought we were going to have a bad time since we didn't know much about them. Surprisingly, the interview was great after an hour of chitchat and laughs, not to mention competing with a time-hogging journalist. In fact, after the interview, we shook their hands, took a picture with them, swallowed our pride, immediately listened to their CD "The Promise" and actually hummed their songs the next day. (Darn, why did they have to be so nice?)

4:20 p.m.: The bell rang. We had only 40 minutes to change our Catholic schoolgirl uniforms, freshen up and rush to Galleria Suites. ("Hurry up Cher! We only have 40 minutes and you still can't stop saying Al!")

4:38 p.m.: We left with our friends waving goodbye as if we were going to jail. We were scribbling down last-minute questions, putting muck on our faces in the cramped car and trying to assure Leda from Warner we were going to be there by 5.

5:01 p.m.: Room 801. We were saved.

5:15 p.m.: We meet their manager, Mitchell, first. He was explaining to us they had a very hectic schedule and they liked it here in the Philippines. They even missed the Grammy's just to be here… (Right, and we're both from Destiny's Child)

5:38 p.m.: The interview finally starts. So what do you get when you put two rocker/interviewers, two other journalists and the hottest Christian boy band in one hotel room? The deflowering of Plus One… sort of.

The guys from Plus One all came into the room together to sit on the couch for the interview. But how'd they *really* come together? One sunny day on the West Coast, auditions were being held for a boy band. Twenty-year-old Jeremy Mhire (Yes, he's the Pinoy you've been hearing about—mom's Filipino; grandpa used to be a guerilla in the Philippines) and 21-year-old Oregon-born Gabe Combs heard about it through word of mouth. Nineteen-year-old Nate Cole was discovered by their manager at a singing competition. They all auditioned, and youngest member 18-year-old Jason Perry and oldest member 22-year-old Nathan Walters came a little later… thus the birth of Plus One.

Plus One talks about God, sex, living together, sleeping together (well, sort of), boy band image and Sticky Hearts

NATE Cole
PHOTOS: ROMY HOMILLADA

"Plus One basically means us plus God. It's a reminder that God is always with us." Gabe explains. "The same producer who told Gabe about the group was always joking around about names and stuff, and we were trying to figure out our name as a group," offers Jeremy. "And one day, he said 'Why not make it Five Plus One?' He said it in a joking way but we wanted our name to have a meaning… something that meant something to us and not just a name, and we said, 'What about just Plus One?' "

And to think that they were initially going to be called Blue. "Blue is for boys and pink is for girls," Nate pipes up. "And we said we're guys and that's our name… Blue." Gabe says. But there was no relevance, so they scrapped that.

Isn't it kinda contradictory—a Christian group with a boy band image? Boy bands are often associated with sex and whatever.

Nate: I mean, I'm not saying we're out to change the boy band image, but just to create our own. We found our own identity as a group and before coming together as a band, we were trying to find out where we fit somewhere in music, but our faith has always been part of our lives. Before the group started out, three of us actually grew up in pastors' homes where our fathers administered so we all grew up singing in church. We all knew we all wanted to be in music and sing the rest of our lives, but we also knew we wanted to be in ministry, which is something a bit higher and a little bit deeper than just music. We want to affect other people's lives and have a positive message to stay in people's lives. And at the same time, we wanna be cool and on the edge, just like what you're saying.

You guys have lived together and still live together. So who shares rooms?

Gabe: In San Francisco, we started living in a one-bedroom apartment. It was crazy. I slept in the closet, Jeremy slept in the living room, Jason and Nate slept in the other room. Then we moved to L.A., we had a two-bedroom apartment, and Nate and I slept together.

JASON Perry

JEREMY Mhire

GABE Combs

NATHAN Walters

Nate: Hey!!! (Laughter)

Gabe: I mean, in the same room. (Throws his hands up) Wait a secccond.

Nate: We had two separate beds. Two separate beds.

Gabe: And then Nathan and Jason slept in the other room and Jeremy slept in the living room. And now, we live in Nashville, Tennessee, where Nathan and I sleep together… (Everyone cracks up and Gabe throws his head backward howling with laughter)

Nathan: We have a three-bedroom apartment now. Gabe and I share a room… and Nate and Jason share a room… and Jeremy gets his own room.

Jeremy: Yeah, I got to sleep on the couch downstairs when we lived in L.A…

We think you guys are going to be successful worldwide in a couple of months. Are you planning on buying a mansion or a ranch?

All: No. (Laughter)

Jeremy: Actually right now, we're looking into buying a house.

Gabe: Right now, we all live in a little apartment where we live upstairs and we play our music really loud and our neighbors understairs, er, downstairs, would get really mad at us.

Jeremy: Understairs?! (Snickers)

Who's the neat freak?

All: Jeremy!

Nate: His shoes are in line and everything is like separated.

How about the messiest?

(Gabe and Nate both point at each other at the same time)

Gabe: Nate!

Nate: Gabe!

If you were to sing a song from the album to a girl, what song would that be?

Nate: "Last Flight Out."

Gabe: We would sing that 'cause we're in that transition a lot. We'll see a girl for a little bit then we'd have to take the last flight out 'cause we're busy, we have to go somewhere.

(Jason puts his hand on his heart, and Jeremy makes a funny expression)

You have your individual e-mail addresses. Do you guys get all your e-mail/fan mail? Do you guys reply?

Nate: We try to.

Gabe: We try to but sometimes it gets really hard.

Nate: They gave us all the ones that they think we'd respond to.

Would you ever date a fan?

Jeremy: Well, I wouldn't say no.

Nate: I would say someone who's a fan of our music who really got to know me.

Gabe: Okay, check this out. I'm dating a girl right now whom I met and who went to our concert. So I guess she might be considered a fan.

Jason: I don't know. I mean I would never date a fan like someone I met out of a show… as far as someone that was there. I think for me I would need a girl in my life who would tell me straight up if I'm wrong.

Nate: A fan could turn into that for you…

Jason: Well, she could, but I don't want a girl to look at me because I'm a singer or because I'm in music; because I'm in a band.

Nathan: You want her to be critical and say, "Look, you can do better than this."

Nate: I'd want a girl who'll miss me when I'm on the road but won't be so lonely she can't handle herself, because all of us are gonna have to have a girl who's gonna be at home without us. She's gonna have to focus on something and put her time into something besides just us because if we're her only world—her only life, and when we're gone, she has no life—that's terrible. So we have to have a girl who can kinda live without us in a way.

What are your thoughts on sex and premarital sex, being a Christian band?

Nate: Well, we're waiting till we're married to have sex. (A chorus of "yeahs")

Gabe: Choose abstinence.

Nathan: Sex totally out of the bond of marriage is not cool for us to do. We have a relationship with God and first of all, we think this doesn't keep us pure (puts his hand to his chest)—it's a sin.

Nate: Okay, I've heard it described like this: You have a heart, right? And it's totally like a sticker. Your heart's a sticker, this other person's heart is a sticker and you put the two hearts together and you have sex together and when you leave that person, you tear it apart. The more you do that, the less sticky your heart gets… (Jeremy and Nathan snicker) and it's hard to attach to someone else. But I feel if a person's had sex maybe a hundred times and then he comes to know God and then he becomes really passionate about doing what's right, I think God can heal that.

You can write a song about that and call it "Sticky Hearts."

(Everyone totally cracks up)

(It's time to wrap up… we beg for a five-minute extension and Jason comes to our aid and tells them to give us more time. Awww.)

How'd you guys get involved with Habitat for Humanity?

Jeremy: As a group, even before we were in Plus One, we used to do service projects and mission trips. We used to go overseas and stuff like that.

Jason: My dad's a pastor and he got invited to preach in South Africa with the pastors there so I went with him and sang.

Nathan: I went to Portugal. We brought a band and we played for prisoners. I was the only young guy and they'd introduce me to all these big guys who've been in prison all these years, and they'd all be like, 'Yeah!'

Nate: We go to inner cities jut to clean up trash. Just things that are really simple and it's not like we had to put a lot of thought into it. We're just lending a helping hand. Now that we made an album, we're not some stars who can't go down the streets and help somebody. And we found an organization we wanna be a part of—Habitat for Humanity. They build homes for people who don't have homes. We went for a week, woke up really early in the morning and worked on a house in the middle of summer… 105 degrees… hammering nails on the roof. It was very fun though and very rewarding. When you make someone else happy, you feel really good about it.

Nathan: One time when we were outside fixing to leave on our tour bus, this lady who came from a grocery store was trying to put her groceries into her car, and Nate comes out and starts helping her. We try to do things like that.

Jason: It comes down to another basic of Christianity. Jesus Christ came to the world to serve others and to save the world. So we're not here to be served, not to sit back and be like, "Give me this, give me whatever"—like we're big pop stars. We wanna be involved on a personal level and help other people out—to serve, do what we're called to do.

Some quick poppys. N' Sync or Backstreet Boys?

All: N' Sync.

Pro or anti-Napster?

Gabe: Pro.

Jeremy: Anti.

Nate: I don't know what I am.

Nathan: Anti… but as long as they're charging…

Jason: Anti. I'm probably gonna go pro as long as they buy the album.

Britney or Christina?

Jeremy: Christina, voice. Britney, looks.

Nate: Christina has a better voice but Britney's the better performer.

Grammy award or MTV award?

All: Grammy.

If you were to be on the front cover of any magazine, what would you want it to be?

Nate: People or Time. Not just a music magazine, something a lot of people would see. Like 50 most beautiful people…

Or Time's Men of the Year!

Nate: Right. (Smiles)

Any TV or movie projects in the future?

Nate: TV, yes. Probably "Touched by an Angel."

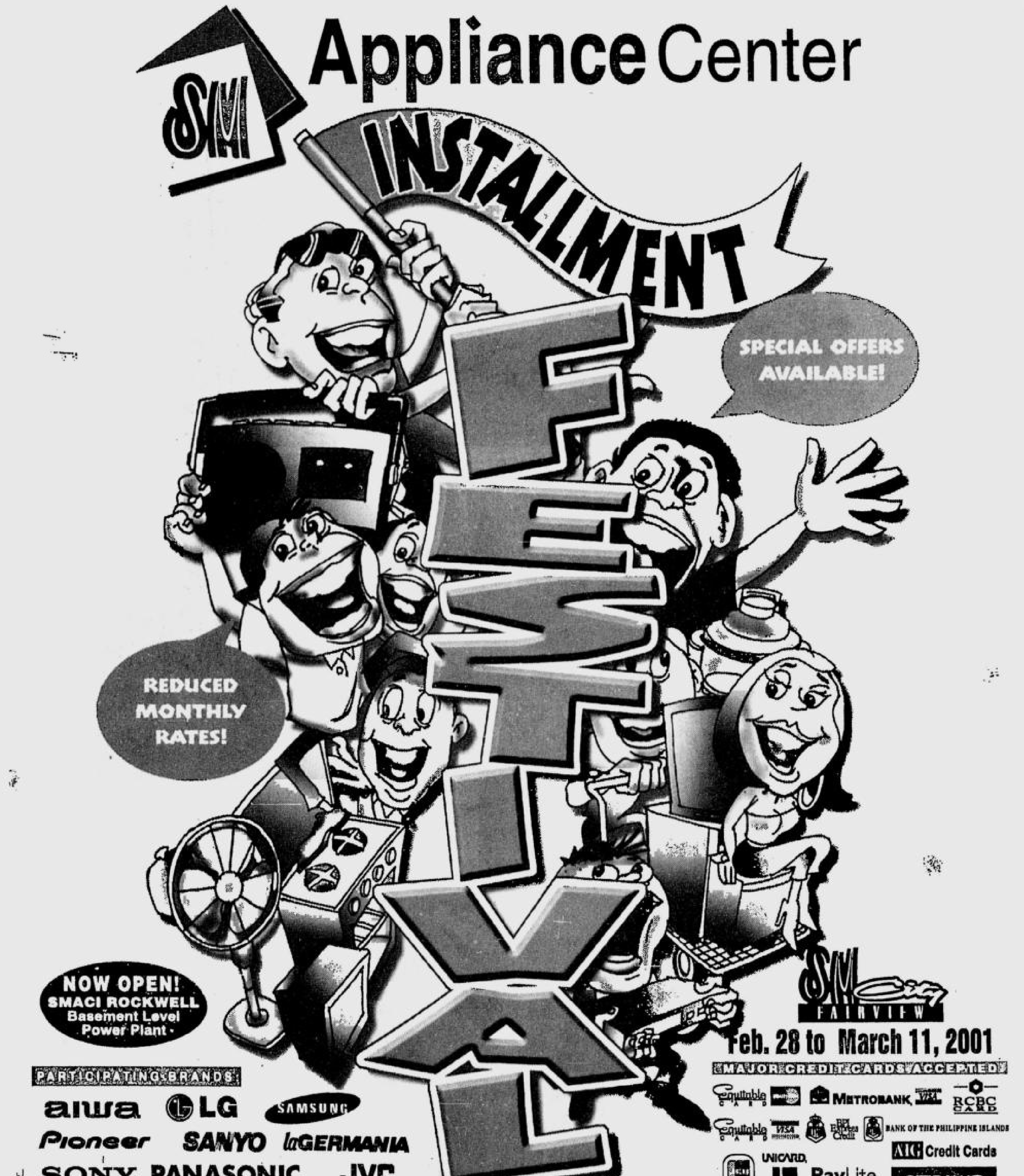
Nathan: It depends on the script. There have been TV shows we've turned down in the past.

How about shows like "Dawson's Creek" or "Felicity" where sex is abundant, like I mean Joey and Pacey are planning to you know…

Jeremy: (His face totally lights up) They did?!?

Gabe: (Stands up and shrieks) Joey, noooo!!!

6:47 p.m.: One message received. Sender Maui Reyes: "Are the rumors true? You guys actually enjoyed the interview?"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The rite of manhood called Boy Bayot

BY MOZART A.T. PASTRANO

I GREW up in a place in Mindanao where the rites of manhood included a tryst with someone called Boy Bayot.

Those who did not grow up in that milieu would probably take offense at such a moniker, for *bayot*, in the local tongue, refers to a male homosexual. But as far as I know, everyone calls him Boy Bayot with fondness, not derision, nor even malice.

There is no going around the fact that he's, well, a male homosexual. Gay. *Bakla*. As much as he can, he dolls himself up with girlie relish. His meticulously made-up face and unrepentantly long black hair announce to one and all the incontrovertible truth. And, believe me, he's never without a man. Or yummy boy.

He simply is our rite of manhood.

And everyone takes it in stride. Or as a matter of course. Well, there was this dramatic moment when a mother once stormed his place in the wee hours to demand that his son be returned to her, *pronto*! The next thing we knew she and Boy were very much like cozy *kumares* in some *sosyalan* a few weeks later.

Because in the society that he moves in, Boy is indispensable.

He is the beautician of choice, whose quivering long fingers are a magic wand that transports a woman (or ripening maiden) from the humdrum of her daily plainness to the hoopla of her startling possibilities.

He is also a wizard in the kitchen. There is no feast without Boy Bayot exercising his culinary prowess.

His expertise is catholic: interior design, floral arrangement, fashion, even motherly advice for the lovelorn or for wives whose husbands have gone astray.

And husbands seek out Boy Bayot, too—because, for one, he gives the most soothing bedtime massage. Picture this: in the master bedroom, Boy and some matron are chattering away about the details of next week's party she is hosting, while Boy's hands are running over the matron's husband lying prone and undressed in bed. Such a cozy threesome.

I am writing about Boy Bayot in 2bU!'s sex issue today because he provides some thoughts to chew on in this day and age.

For one, the kind of *bayot*-ness he epitomizes has become passé: a woman trapped in a man's body. That is no longer the guiding philosophy of gays today.

In fact, the more politically correct term cosmopolitan gays are touting is "MSM." That's "men who like to have sex with other men."

This means that today's male gays harbor no illusions about being other than men—no makeup, no cross-dressing. They're simply men who like to, uh, play with other men.

Which I think is a liberating framework, because it frees every other man from constricting labels. This actually means any man can have sex with other men, and not be afraid that someone will call them names that box them out from the rest of humankind.

The second point about the MSM philosophy is that it is anchored on act and actualization: "like to have sex." No more romantic mush—or, as Tina Turner pointed out, "what's love got to do, got to do with it?"

He's never without a man. Or a yummy boy. Or, good heavens!, even a screaming matron

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

That is the difference between male and female gays. The former are very physical about it, the latter are very psychological. Mention the word *cocooning*, and male gays will imagine a sexual position while female gays will think of a state of together-ness.

Which does not mean it's all about sex. As in any coupling, gay relationships that last are built on trust as well as day-to-day patience and hard work. You may not see each other every day, but in all your trials and tribulations, you grow together and become better people together.

The Chinese saying is very apt: What does not kill you strengthens you.

Nowadays you see male gays everywhere, but it is difficult to be sure. They're good-looking guys, well-built, in traditional male jobs. They even have girlfriends and, uh, kids.

The point is, there is no more need for finger-pointing and public humiliation. Who cares if you're gay or not as long as you are a fulfilled human being who makes your worthwhile contribution to humanity?

That is the other lesson Boy Bayot has taught the people around him. You should not be limited by your sexual preference. Being gay is only one aspect of yourself; you move in society with all the rest of what and who you are.

After all, sex and sexuality are only one facet of one's existence, while life, my dear, is so much more besides.

Bravo, Boy Bayot, for being so ahead of your times!

E-mail the author at mozpas@yahoo.com

The P-Files

(From page E1)

the States. If you're not "doin' it," you're not what they consider as "cool." Actually this behavior is normal in the everyday lives of teenagers in the States.

But I wasn't one of those teens "doin' it." Even though almost everyone in the cheerleading squad was, I wasn't. I had a boyfriend at the time. I just didn't want to give myself to him. I just didn't think it was right to be "doin' it" just because everyone was. I told my boyfriend I wanted to wait until we were both ready to do it. I also thought it wasn't morally right to do it before marriage.

I don't know why the teenagers in the States don't think like I do. They don't think about moral issues. They live their life like there's no tomorrow. No worries.

I guess this is why people here in the Philippines think people from the States are promiscuous. They just stereotype us as among the wild and crazy US teenagers.

I don't know why people here can't see past my blonde streaks and my slang. I especially hate it when people from my school think I'm this huge flirt just because I act really *"kikay"* and *"maarte" daw*.

People I don't even know make up rumors about me that I have all these boyfriends from different schools. I even heard a rumor I kissed a guy on the 10th floor of our building, which is so not true!

I don't even know why these people are like this. Sometimes I say to myself, "Hmmm, it must be my hair..." I guess they just have nothing better to do. I guess it also has something to do with first impressions. Maybe when they see me in school, they think, "Oh just another one of those wild Am-girls."

This is one of the things I really hate about people in our school. They're so judgmental. They don't really know the real me.

But you know what? I don't really care as long as I have my true friends. Let me just say that not everyone who comes from the States is your typical American teen. *Siyempre naman* we still have our values and morals that our parents have taught us.

I partied in Texas for most of my teenage life, but I didn't do what everyone else there was doing. I didn't have to "do it" to be "in." I'm not bragging or anything, but at least this 21-one-year old Am-girl can still wear white on her wedding day, right?

Sherylle Anne Yutadco

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Wild pinkie

IT has been said that gays live in a different world. A world that is dark, like the abandoned corners of movie theaters in Cubao. A world in which two men looking eye to eye have more meaning to it than just coincidence. A world that thrives on deserted comfort rooms, dark alleys and construction sites.

I am tired of people calling gays promiscuous. Perhaps they are true, but how different are they from straight men who go on a weekly trip to the night club? Even the way the media perceive gay men is distressing. Certain television programs sensationalize the *bakla* by doing features on prostitution inside the movie houses, at the Quezon Circle and malls. Not that they're not happening, but is that all that is happening?

In a way, it has inflicted a certain stigma on me. Just because I'm gay, some people believe I have a flourishing nightlife. Even my friends tell me I should all the more be promiscuous because being gay gives me the guarantee to be so. Homosexuality is an alternative lifestyle. Therefore, gays should live this lifestyle even if it's shunned by the society. But my problem is that this alternative lifestyle seems equated with an active sex life.

One by one, I saw my friends gave in to this kind of lifestyle. Having been raised in a Catholic school, I used to think there was actually a way to reconcile the idea of Catholicism and homosexuality. However, it is difficult to have faith in a Church that publicly asserts its machismo, maintaining its traditions for centuries. Finding no shelter in the Church they were baptized in, they find home in the company of other gay friends.

One of them has had several strings of one-night stands. Flings that consist of intimate moments with a tricycle driver, callboys and guys he just met. Casual sex, they're called, and it usually consists of a head job. Most of the time, he has to pay them, but there have been instances when sex is all that is exchanged.

He used to preach to us about homosexuality, back when we were still in high school. He'd say something like, "It's the work of the devil." He also spoke contemptuously of my other friend's devotion to Mary. He says it was because of this that my friend became gay. Now he himself is an active homosexual.

I used to have a friend in high school who never even tried flirting with the boys. I was able to relate to him because we pretty much lie toward that direction of "traditional" thinking. When we went to college, he decided to live a new life and become a real man. Two years after, I learned he had had casual sex with strangers, even with blue-collar workers.

I tried to learn from them why gays have the tendency to be promiscuous. They said it could actually be addicting. "Once you pop, you can't stop," was how they put it. And I guess I won't be able to understand the addictive effects of homosexual encounters unless I actually get to try it.

I'm not innocent. I'm not inexperienced. The first time I made love to a guy, I felt awkward, delighted, horny and shameful. I thought it was a sin. I thought it was great. It was almost every day that we did it, and I don't really know why I surrendered myself totally. I thought about it then and I still have the same defense until now: I used to love the guy, that's why I did it.

I call it my defense because I don't want to be labeled promiscuous. I don't want to be labeled promiscuous because I know it's a sin. God says so. I should know. I go to Church every Sunday. However, I have started to look past my religion and center on God instead. God loves everyone, whether you're straight or gay, promiscuous or not.

Gay writers say homosexuals are driven to satisfy their sexual desires in dark places because society has driven them underground. Considering that heterosexuality is the norm in our society, why then do straight men (and women) also hide in dark places? I think promiscuity is a manifestation of repression. You repress someone of their sexuality and they go find a place to express it. And homosexuals, being a repressed unit in the community, just do what human nature dictates them to do.

An alternative lifestyle should not be equated with a promiscuous sex life. Homosexuality can also be defined as the desire to love someone of the same sex. Whether this love is physical or emotional, I don't see anything wrong in it. It's love, for God's sake!

Blue Arden

E-mail the author at blue_arden@hotmail.com

ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

Wild thing

I AM promiscuous. There. I said it out loud. No one has actually called me that to my face, except my best friend when she gets exasperated with me and all the crazy things I do.

But I don't need other people to tell me something I know. I've always believed in freedom of expression. I've always believed in doing what I think is right. I live by the principle that I can do what I want, as long as I'm not hurting anyone. So I've had sex. With different guys. And I've enjoyed it. Why should anyone care about what I do behind closed doors?

Such a far cry from my life in high school. I was a total guy then. I was one of the boys, I wore jeans and sneakers all the time. I didn't have a single dress in my closet. Although I knew what sex was, I was considered innocent by most of my peers. I never dated, never kissed, never petted. Never did anything "bad"—at least not in that sense.

I discovered my sexuality when I stepped into college. I felt grown up, felt like a woman. I had relationships with men and lost my virginity at 19. The first time wasn't all that fantastic. When he was done, I looked at the guy in the eye and said, "That's it?" And I headed for the shower. But that didn't stop me from doing it again. And again. I've done it with boyfriends, I've done it with friends. I almost did it with a girl—but she freaked out. I've been offered to join a threesome several times, but I haven't done it—yet.

I've had problems with guys expecting more than just sex, guys who automatically think they have the right to make demands just because you take off your clothes in front of them.

In a short span of time, I learned to be good at something men excel in—ignoring their emotions and treating sex as just sex. People make the big mistake of attaching too much meaning to it. Sex doesn't automatically mean romance. It doesn't automatically mean an eternity with that person. I forgot which movie this came from, but I would never forget this line: "Sex is just an exchange of body fluids."

Don't get me wrong. Sex is a big deal—especially when it's done with the one you really care for. It's definitely better—that's when it becomes "making love."

I can talk about sex without being sleazy, in a matter-of-fact way. I don't like green jokes at all. Those girls who squeal and blush when the word "sex" is mentioned, those girls who like playing innocent are the first girls to get pregnant when they step out in the real world.

I've never gotten pregnant, never had any disease. What I'm doing is risky, but I believe in constantly being safe. I'm careful. I choose the guys I do it with and I use protection. Sex isn't a game for me. It's just reality.

Some people choose to wait, I did not. This was my decision and I'm sticking by it. I just don't think it's fair for other people to start judging me because of my sexuality. I mean, come on. There is more to me than just my sex life.

I'm being true to my self. At least I'm not pretending to be someone I'm not. I face the world with one thought in mind—this is me. If you don't like it, it's not my loss.

Other girls express worry over guys not accepting them if they're no longer virgins. I don't. My personality does not depend on whether my hymen is intact or not. If a guy refuses to be with me because I've had sex before we were together, then forget it. I wouldn't want to spend the rest of my life with him. He's not worthy of my love.

I will not change just because of what people might be saying about me. So what if I'm having sex? That's not the only thing I'm doing. I'm actually making the most out of my life. I'm young. I'm free. I'm happy. That for me is the most important thing.

Passion Junkie

E-mail the author at thepassionjunkie@yahoo.com

I just received my first paycheck and all the stores are calling my name. I'm so excited I forgot to reload my celfone, not to mention my wallet, too. But no more jampacked ATMs for me. I've finally figured out a better way to shop.

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   - b. *From SMART MONEY menu, click on TRANSFER.*
   - c. *Key in the 12-digit MCOM number of the recipient party and press OK.*
   - d. *Select a preset amount and press OK.*
   - e. *Key in your W-PIN and press OK.*
   - f. *The SMART Money MasterCard system verifies your W-PIN, account status, and SMART Money MasterCard funds. If details are validated, your SMART Money MasterCard account will then be debited and the value is transferred to the recipient.*
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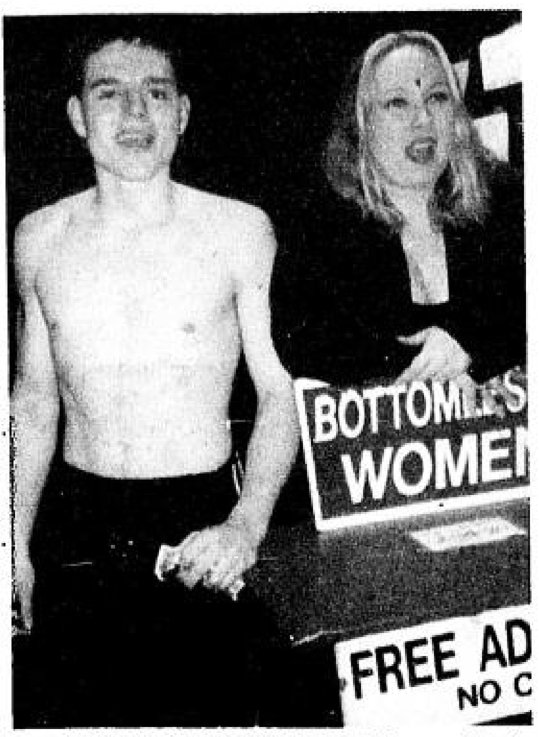
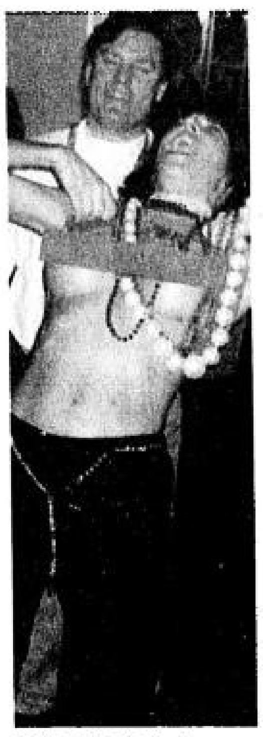
BAUBLES, BANGLES AND BEADS. For this reveler, more is definitely merrier.



CRAVING FOR ICED TEA? Satisfy your thirst, male or female.


WIGGLE it, just a little bit... Ooops!

THONG-A-THONG-THONG-THONG...

THE KREWE IS COMING. Street parades are aplenty during Mardi Gras season.

Beadtime stories at New Orleans' Mardi Gras

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY TIM YAP

It's a parade of boobs, beavers and birdies, but if you're lucky, amid the bacchanalia, you will hear the soulful singing of a city celebrating 'home sweet home'

ARE you, guys, here for a business trip?" asked our burly driver, complete with Southern drawl and rat tail, on our way from the New Orleans airport to the city's downtown French Quarter.

"I'm here for a party trip," I quipped excitedly as I browsed through the Mardi Gras magazine before me.

"Well you've come to the right place."

Settling down at Holiday Inn's Royal Street French Quarter hub, I slowly but surely mapped out the places I wanted to check out—clubs, parade sites and shopping stops. I completely forgot that I had about 14 hours of travel time on the Northwest Airlines flight that I took, since I slept oh-so-comfortably during the entire trip.

Walking within the vicinity of our hotel, one could feel that it was, indeed, carnival season. Masks and beads of all sizes and colors abound—it was Mardi Gras! The New Orleans' version is one of the most awaited, most visited festivals in the United States and around the world.

Mardi Gras is translated as Fat Tuesday, the day before Lent, or Ash Wednesday. The festivities are a sort of "last hurrah" to indulge in whatever desire, material or matters of the flesh, before engaging in the season of fasting and abstinence.

Beading and catching

Here's how it goes: Revelers await the floats which pass through the whole city, throwing out colorful beads, cups and coins at everyone who comes their way. The thrill is in catching, or snatching these beads as they fly off in midair. Think basketball rebound. Once you have these beads draped around your neck, you're all set. (You can also buy them from the market, you know—but where's the excitement in all of that?)

After all that beading, you head off to Bourbon Street (yes, that street famous for jazz and Creole and Cajun cuisine) and throw those beads at whoever you fancy and boy, will you be surprised at what they would do for a pair of glittering balls!

Bourbon Street is a long stretch of bars, cafés and hangout spots—something similar to Nakpil, only it is about five to seven times more extended, but everything is walking distance.

These nights leading to the Mardi Gras, when a guy throws a bead to a lassie, the girl is suddenly surrounded by others, chanting, "Show your tits, show your tits!" And when the same happens to a guy, surrounded by girls, it's "Show your dick, show your dick!" And both sexes gladly oblige, to the delight of bystanders, cameras and camcorders. Strike a pose, click, click. (I can now have a photo exhibit.)

The night all of a sudden becomes a parade of boobs, beavers and birdies—all uninhibited souls up for the taking. Lots of peeping, kissing and licking all over. One night, I decided to come as the devil, complete with sparkling horns, red leopard print jacket, taking Polaroid shots of people in the buff and exhaling ghastly moans.

I would give them their *au naturel*-inspired photo and smilingly scream, "Go to hell!" But before you see me as a neurotic pornographer, this was all done in the spirit of fun, satisfying the voyeur in me. It felt good to indulge.

Fusion

Truth be told, even without the Mardi Gras revelry, I would have still loved New Orleans—it is the perfect fusion of European character and American attitude.

Street parades, all-night parties and costumed carnivals overflow weeks before the festivities, as a plethora of revelers crowd the city. The atmosphere is aural, experiential. There is this invisible yet palpable sense of energy surrounding the city. Anticipation fills the air.

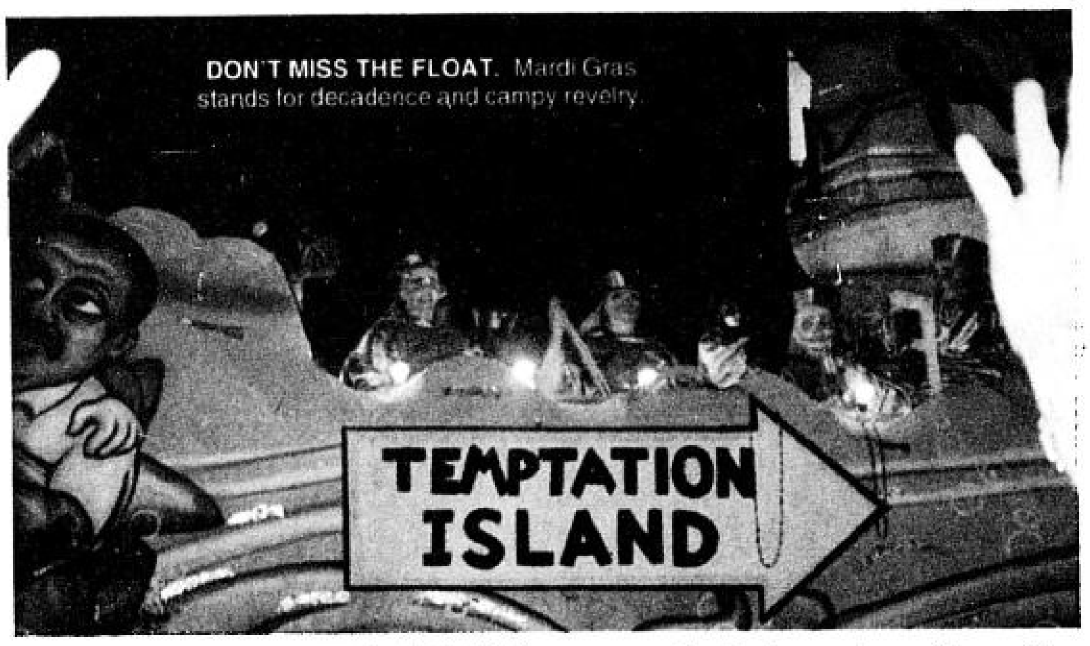
The mix of musicians in each astonishing alley filled with lacework cast-iron balconies reminiscent of pre-historic European homes enhances that laid-back vibe. Art galleries, specialty stores, Creole and Cajun hip restos further intensify the orgasmic overflow of the sights and sounds that New Orleans has to offer.

I still can't forget that one night I was going home from an all-night drinking spree—I was buzzed. Afloat walking the streets, a melody swam around my senses. It was this black guy, singing with all his soul in the middle of the street, "I'm gonna take you on my shoulder, bring you home, home sweet home, home sweet home..."

All of a sudden, he grounded me—to the core. It was as if his voice carried me and swept me whole. It kept repeating on my mind until the crude walls and blaring lights were replaced by some kind of a dreamscape, like I made it all up.

New Orleans had that kind of effect on me—magical to say the least.

Indeed, I had come to the right place.



DON'T MISS THE FLOAT. Mardi Gras stands for decadence and campy revelry.

A MYRIAD of colors adorn the streets of New Orleans during Mardi Gras season.

SMILE! It's Mardi Gras, says Krusty the Clown.

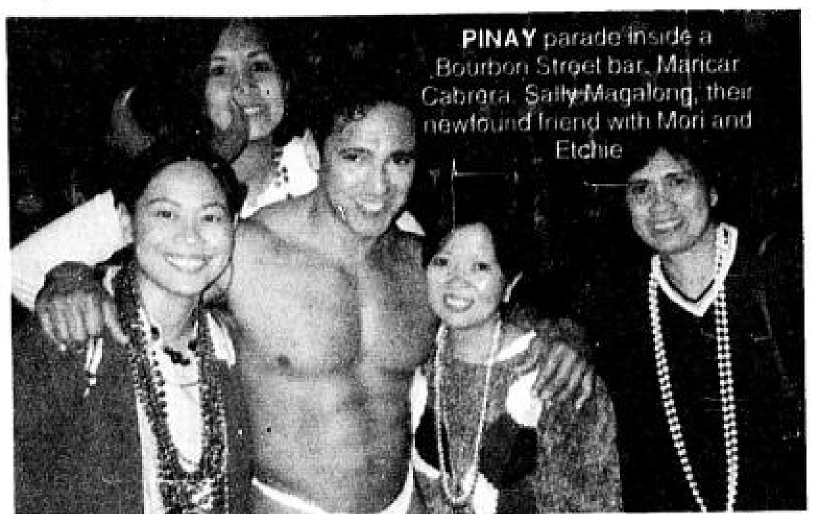
MAGIC TO DO. The Crescent City carnival is on!

JAZZ IT UP. The city is popular for its powerful oh-so-soulful music.

MASQUERADE. Paper faces on parade

AT THE FRENCH QUARTER. Laced cast iron balconies reflect European influences.

BUTT, you're blocking my view. Butt, butt...

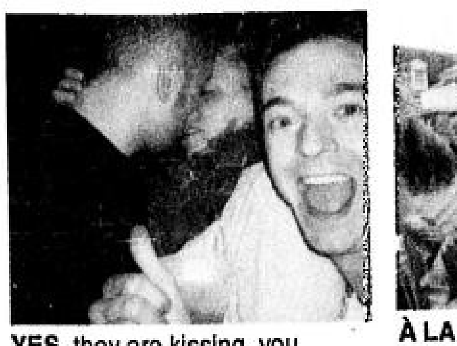

PINAY parade inside a Bourbon Street bar. Maricar Cabrera, Sally Magalong, their newfound friend with Mori and Etchie

REVELERS reach out for beads and trinkets—and much, much more.

"TODAY is your birthday, and you are at Fridays..." The author with Maricar Cabrera of Northwest and Jun Flores of Magsaysay Shipping on the streets of New Orleans

AT PALACE Café are Rene Rielm of Singa and Neng Zayco of Avon.

NOTHING will stop this partyphile from indulging.


YES, they are kissing, you peeping Tom, er, Tim!

À LA CARTE. Masked Crescent City characters fill the streets with color and vibrance.

SMART Money unlocks the doors to mobile commerce for Filipino businesses.

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Here are just a few ways that SMART Money can power-up your business.

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Coming to terms with emotional trauma

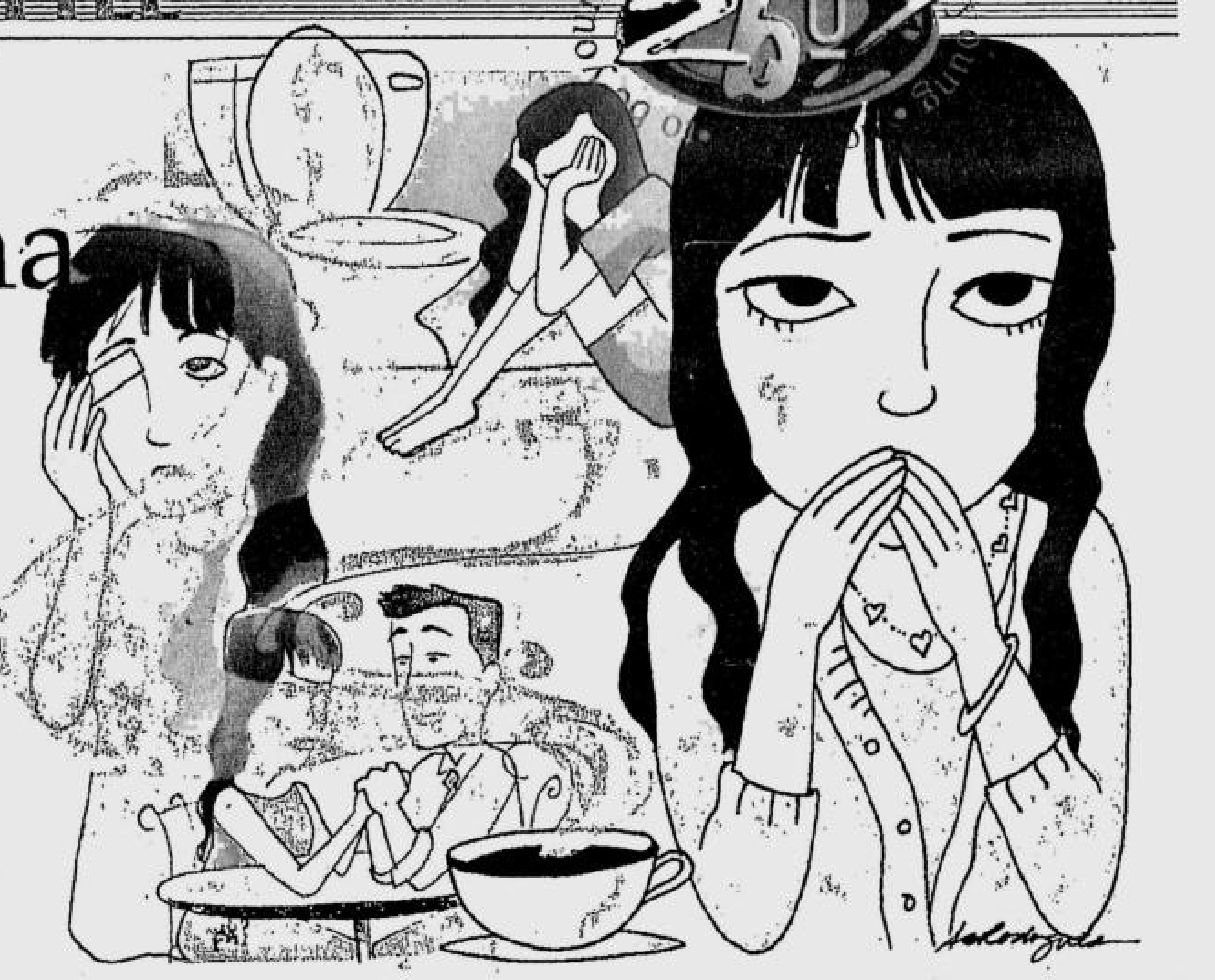

to be you • to be young • 2bU

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

IT is her biggest regret, Stella, a 24-year-old fresh graduate of one of the top universities, shares with me one Saturday afternoon in one of those ubiquitous coffee salons in Makati. She was oblivious of people looking her way as she entered the café. Purposeful in her stride, she seemed like the kind of person who knows exactly where she wants to go. When I mentioned this to her in the course of our conversation, she smiled wistfully and said that for a long time, she was so lost.

Stella did not mince words as she told me the gory details of the "most painful experience, both in the literal and figurative sense" of her life. "It is something I am ashamed of, and for a long time, *di ko masabi kahit kanino*," she says, sadness written all over her face.

It was quite amazing she agreed to be interviewed. After years of being quiet, she felt she needed to talk about her mistake, "not to preach but just to let them know *kung gaano kamali yun ginawa ko*." Of course, Stella is not her real name. But that is the only thing that is untrue in this story. Everything else is real.

Foolish games

Stella and Carl were together for almost two years. Stella was on a leave of absence from school when she met Carl. "I had nothing to do and I guess that was the reason my time and energies were focused on him," she says. Constant companionship paved the way for them to get to know each other intimately as well. Albeit they had "gone very far," it was only the act itself that they had not yet done.

"I was so in love with him. I think it was bordering on obsession," she says with nary a smile on her face. They didn't hit the sack right away for she still had quite a few issues to tackle before committing to the sex act itself. "I was not being *pakipot* or anything. I knew it was inevitable, that I would end up doing it with him. *Pero* I wanted it to be special the first time," she explained.

But special it was not because she was forced by Carl into doing the deed while she was inebriated one particular night. "*Siguro nga* date rape *yun kasi* I didn't want to do it and I was too drunk to put up a fight," Stella says as she drags on her cigarette, obviously trying to gather strength from nicotine. It was quite unfortunate she didn't say anything about the traumatic incident.

"*Sinong maniniwala sa akin eh mag*-boyfriend *kami ni* Carl? I was so afraid to tell my mom *naman*," she says. Carl apologized profusely and since she was in love and "foolish" at that time, she set aside all the anger and forgave him on condition that they were not going to have sex again, or at least "not for a long time."

C.O.D. (cause of delay)

Before she knew it, Stella's period was delayed. The second line on the pregnancy test kit confirmed what she suspected all along; she was pregnant. "I don't know if it was mother's instinct *pero alam ko kaagad* I was pregnant, even before I took the test," she says.

When asked how she felt, she said she was more excited than freaked out. She fell in love with the unborn baby right there and then, and despite the traumatic incident involving the baby's conception, she knew she wanted to keep the baby.

But there was Carl. When told, Carl walked out on her and, in fact, "didn't talk to me for like two weeks," she narrates. Stella was in a quandary as to how she was going to handle the situation. Still, she went to a gynecologist for a prenatal checkup.

Then Carl gave her a call and asked her a question. " 'What about my future?' he asked me," she recounts. Carl is the eldest in a family of seven and was an aspiring pilot at the time. "Carl was not the *madaldal* type so I knew this was his way of saying he didn't want the baby," she says, this time on the verge of crying. Carl gave her an ultimatum—it was either him or the baby. Stella had not told anyone, not even her family, regarding her delicate situation, so that made her feel even worse.

"Feeling *ko sobrang nag-iisa ako*. And I didn't want to be alone and pregnant so in the end, I chose Carl," she says regretfully.

The dastardly deed

Things happened fast after she made the decision to "get rid" of the baby. She was almost three months pregnant and "we were afraid *na baka makahalata na yung* family *ko*," she says. Carl and Stella knew that drastic measures had to be taken.

In hindsight, she says that even though in her heart she didn't want to get rid of the baby and that she knew it was "wrong," she was foolish and "*sobrang tanga*" to conclude she had no other options at the time.

Someone told Carl about those old ladies in Quiapo who sell herbal medicine ("*ugat-ugat*") that induce menstruation. So he went there. "This *manang* told him *na medyo matagal na akong buntis* so *di na pwede ang ugat-ugat, dapat tabletas na*," she narrates, trying to hide her uneasiness with a cloud of cigarette smoke.

Twelve tablets originally meant to cure ulcer pains were sold to Carl at an exorbitant price, together with specific instructions on its intake. "*Garantisado daw yun, sabi nung manang*."

Stella, all alone in her house, took the tablets the day after Carl gave them to her. There were a dozen she had to take in a span of a couple of hours. "I didn't want to think about it. I just felt numb as I took the first tablets," she says. The gravity of the deed dawned on her when she began to bleed profusely by the second hour.

"I was crying so hard because it was only then I realized that I was killing my baby," she says with tears in her eyes. When I asked her how painful it was, she answered by likening the experience to a really bad case of dysmenorrhea, only this time, it was "a thousand, a million times worse."

She kept on bleeding that she felt she was only "half-alive" as she cleaned herself up in the bathroom. It didn't help at all that at the same time she had LBM. "There was so much blood all over and I could not see clearly *kasi iyak ako ng iyak*. No one was around to help me. Plus I could literally feel the baby struggling in my puson so I knew the baby was hurting even more," she says as she struggles to keep her tears in check. She knew the baby was dying.

After three hours of nonstop bleeding, she fell asleep on the bathroom floor. After some time, Stella woke up. Just when she thought the ordeal was over, she felt something dangling while she was urinating. She had already seen gobs of blood earlier so she assumed this was another one of those. Something goaded her to grab what was dangling and what she saw, to put it mildly, was something that she will never forget. "It was the fetus, dead and bloody," she said.

Biggest regret

It has been almost five years since she had the abortion. Stella says she has asked for dispensation from the archbishop of her parish. She has also asked for forgiveness from her family who eventually found out about it.

But up to this very day, she still cannot fathom why she aborted her baby. "It was stupid, stupid, stupid! I take full responsibility for it," she exclaims.

Stella says she will always regret the decision. "That was a life I took, my own baby's. I had no right. I blame myself *kasi* ultimately it was still my choice. *Mali talaga kahit anong sabihin nila na* pro-choice *dapat* or something," she says adamantly. She also realized she endangered two lives: the baby's and her own. There's simply nothing that can justify it, she adds.

She tells me, as if lecturing, "*kaya ikaw*, don't forget to love yourself *muna* before anyone else. Don't ever compromise yourself *por que* in love *ka*. Or at least, when you love, keep your eyes open."

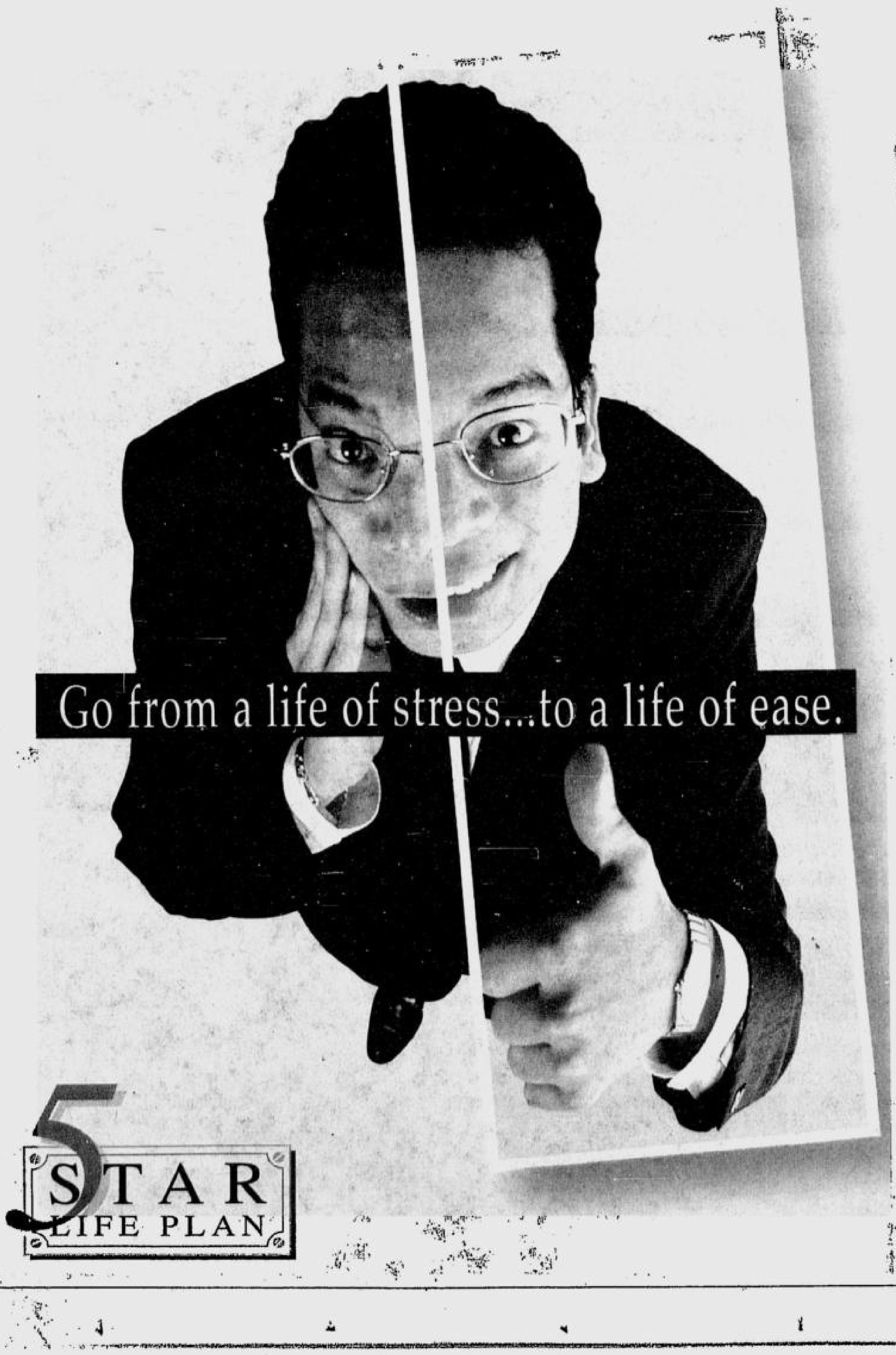
And Carl? He is now a pilot. "We broke up a year after the incident," she says.

Stella, five years later, still looks haunted by her abortion. I guess it is a burden she has willingly taken on as part of her absolution. Although she is trying to come to terms with the emotional trauma, dark clouds still hover over her countenance.

We end the conversation with a tight embrace.

Then she asks me, "I mean, how can you even think about killing your own child?" *Jules Alcantara*

E-mail the author at jules26@gurlmail.com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Once upon a snowy Japan

By Joahnna Frances R. Victoria

When you're 15 and you're sent to a far-away place to live with strangers and go to school in snowy weather, you learn a lot about life

I'VE always wanted something exciting to happen in my life. I thought such an opportunity would never come, until I got an exchange student scholarship to Japan. A dream come true you say? I thought that too. But how soon that changed. Life *is* unpredictable. Here is a once-in-a-lifetime experience that I will never forget.

It was the first time I traveled abroad without my family by my side. There were five of us from the Philippines: four girls and a boy. I was very excited to meet my host family. Too excited actually to think of disappointments. I realize now that was my very first mistake.

When we arrived at the Narita Airport, we were welcomed by Youth For Understanding (YFU) representatives. We were later separated and brought to our respective host families in different areas of Japan.

My host family lived in the northern area, very far from the city that I've always associated with Japan. I stayed in a place called Tochigi-ken. To give you an idea how far it was, I had to ride two bullet trains or shinkansens to reach it. The weather was extremely cold. For the first time in my life, I saw snow. But I noticed it was even colder where I lived.

Finally, I met my host family, the Nakajimas. It was a family similar to my own in that there were the parents and three daughters (make that two in the meantime because their middle child was in college in Tokyo). My host family included grandparents, which was nice because I also had a grandmother back home. I'm the middle daughter in my family but, in snowy Tochigi-ken, I was the youngest. It would have been better perhaps if I had a host brother because I've always wanted to experience life having brothers.

In the country

Everyone in my host family barely spoke English, which made it so difficult for me. Communication was a major problem, although they were very nice to me. Sometimes sign language brought even more confusion.

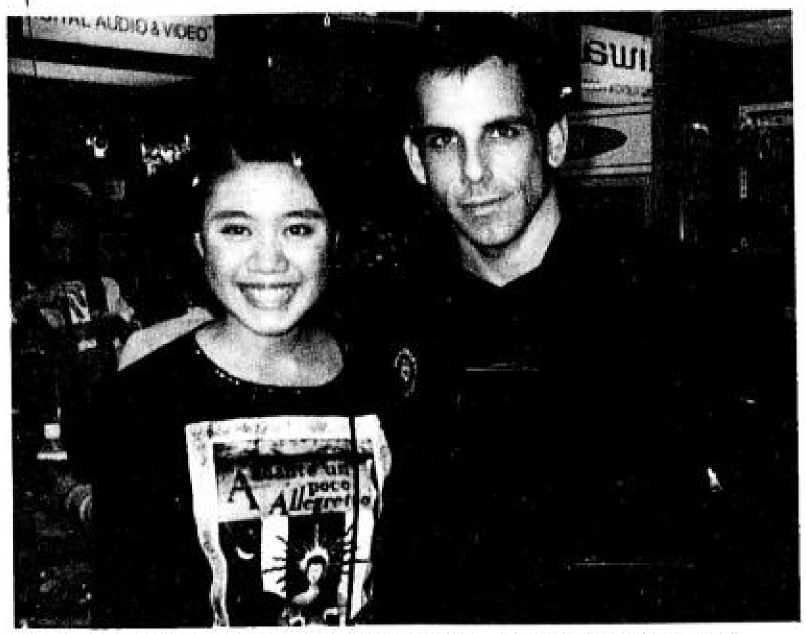
I really didn't get to see much of the area when I arrived because it was already dark. But the day after, I got to see the fields, hills and forests surrounding me. Yes, indeed, I was stuck in the country. (No wonder it was colder there!) There were no commercial centers or malls. It was as rural as it gets.

I didn't even have one day of rest. In the afternoon, I was taken to school to meet the principal and some of the teachers. I had a teacher-cum-tour guide whom I thought was very nice at first but later found annoying.

After that introductory day, I spent the whole day in school for the next four weeks. There were 10-minute breaks in between periods. My classmates were really nice to me even though we had difficulty communicating (it wasn't an international school). They had this expression "Oha," which meant "good morning." I really liked trying on their cute uniforms but it was freezing and I couldn't stand just wearing a short skirt in below-zero temperature.

I forced myself to smile all the time at people since I didn't know Japanese and they didn't understand English and, well, what else could I do? The normal way of going to school was by taking two buses and a 10-minute walk. It really amazed me how people there could be so mobile. Japan and the Philippines have very different transportation systems. I really didn't mind commuting be

ONCE/ p.F3


LOOK who we spotted at the Narita Airport—Ben Stiller, my savior!

STANDING in the snow with my host family's house as background.

CELEBRATING my birthday with Ms Nakajima, Miyuki and Yuko

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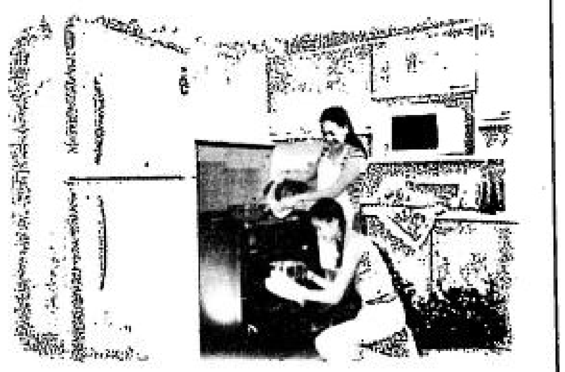
- Pioneer DVD Player M:DV - 535X
- Pioneer Audio 6-speaker package VSX-D737



KITCHEN SHOWCASE
Prepare sumptuous meals with your daughter.

- LG Refrigerator GR - 342, 450.24 liters (15.9 cu.ft.)
- National Microwave Oven 5327 WF
- La Germania Gas Range with rangehood MP-957-21X

GAMES & AMUSEMENT SHOWCASE
Play cyber games with your son.

- Sony Playstation 2 w/ 4 CDs and transformer (Accessories : dance pad, gun, force reactor and dual shock)
- JVC Color TV 21P1P, 53.34 cm. (21")
- TV Rack

Express Payment System

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1. All BPI/BPI Family Bank Express Teller and BPI Direct ATM cardholders who use the EPS from February 5 to April 1, 2001 can join the promo.
2. Every ₱1,000 EPS purchase in a single receipt will qualify a cardholder to one (1) computer-generated raffle number.
3. Only a maximum of five (5) raffle numbers in a day will be assigned to an accountholder who used the EPS.
4. Prizes are as follows:
   * Daily Prizes -3 winners everyday of ₱1,000 each
   * Grand Draw Prizes
     First Prize -Entertainment Showcase
     Second Prize -Kitchen Showcase
     Third Prize -Games and Amusement Showcase
5. For the Daily Draws, the following shall apply:
   5.1 Computer-generated raffle numbers assigned to EPS purchases on a particular date are valid for that date only.
   5.2 An accountholder can win everyday, but only ONCE in each day's draw.
   5.3 Draws will be held at the 15/F, BPI Head Office, Ayala Ave., Makati City on the following dates:

Purchase Dates	Draw Dates
Feb. 5 to Feb 11	Feb. 14
Feb. 12 to Feb 18	Feb. 21
Feb. 19 to Feb. 25	Feb. 28
Feb. 26 to March 4	March 7
March 5 to March 11	March 14
March 12 to March 18	March 21
March 19 to March 25	March 28
March 26 to April 1	April 4

A DTI representative will be present at each draw.
   5.4 The ₱1,000 prize will be credited to the winner's account within seven (7) working days after the draw date.
6. For the Grand Draw, the following shall apply:
   6.1 All computer-generated raffle numbers assigned to EPS purchases within the promo period are qualified for the Grand Draw.
   6.2 Grand Draw will be held on April 4, 2001 at the 15/F, BPI Head Office, Ayala Avenue cor. Paseo de Roxas, Makati City.
   6.3 An accountholder can only win once. If drawn more than once, he will get the prize with the higher value.
   6.4 All Grand Prize winners can claim their prizes at 15/F BPI Head Office Ayala Ave. Makati City. Just present your Express Teller ATM card and one (1) valid ID (driver's license, company ID, SSS ID).
   6.5 Prizes are not convertible to cash. All prizes are tax-free.
7. List of account numbers with corresponding computer-generated raffle numbers will be available at the following locations:
   •BPI Main Branch, BPI Head Office, Ayala Ave., Makati City • BPI Family Bank Main Branch, Paseo de Roxas, Makati City • BPI Baguio Burnham Branch, Baguio City • BPI Cebu-Mango Branch, Cebu City
8. Winners will be notified by registered mail. Complete list of winners will be published in a major newspaper with national circulation at the end of the promo.
9. Unclaimed prizes after 60 days from receipt of notification shall be forfeited with prior approval from DTI.
10. All Express Teller/BPI Direct accounts that are closed/terminated, dormant, under litigation or garnished during the promo period are disqualified.
11. All employees of BPI Unibank, its advertising and PR agencies, and their relatives up to the second degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified.
12. In case of dispute, the decision of BPI Unibank, with the concurrence of DTI, shall be deemed final.

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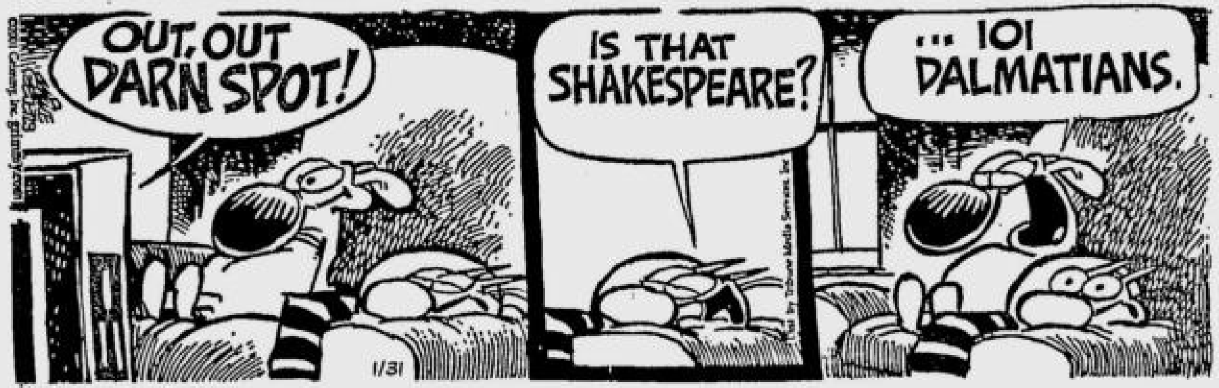
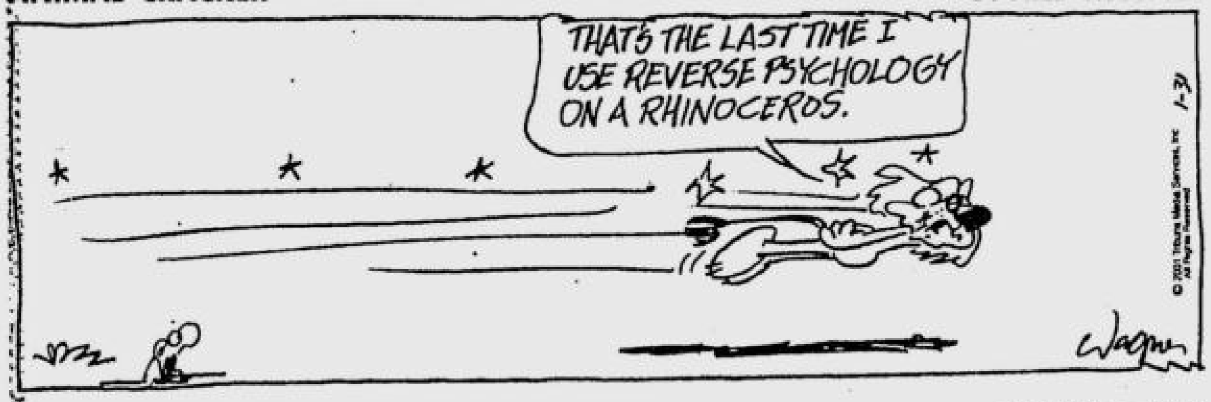
BY MIKE PETERS


OUT, OUT DARN SPOT!
IS THAT SHAKESPEARE?
... 101 DALMATIANS.
1/31

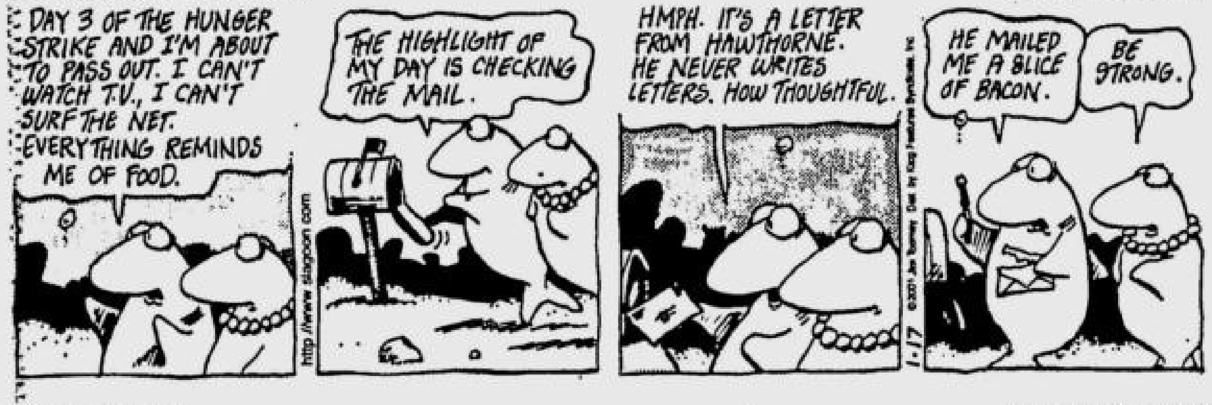
ANIMAL CRACKER

BY FRED WAGNER


THAT'S THE LAST TIME I USE REVERSE PSYCHOLOGY ON A RHINOCEROS.
1-31
Wagner

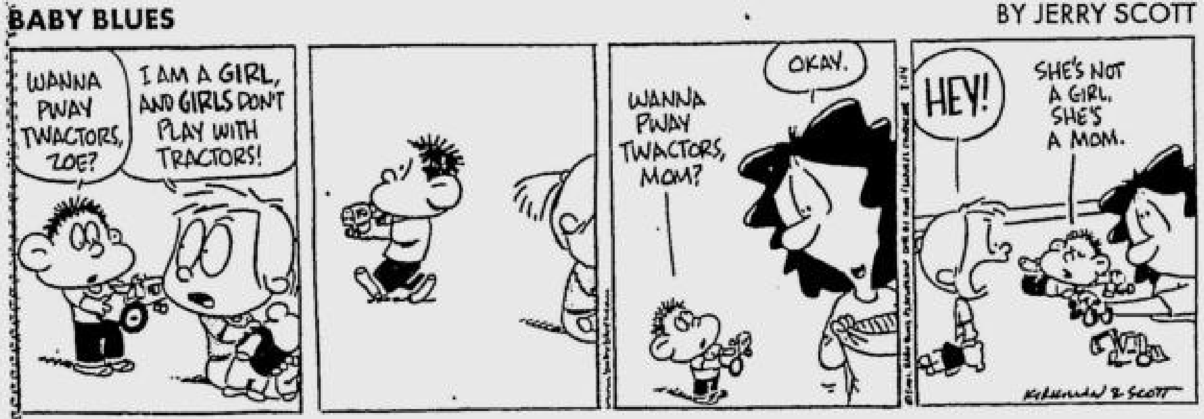
SHERMAN'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY


DAY 3 OF THE HUNGER STRIKE AND I'M ABOUT TO PASS OUT. I CAN'T WATCH T.V., I CAN'T SURF THE NET. EVERYTHING REMINDS ME OF FOOD.
THE HIGHLIGHT OF MY DAY IS CHECKING THE MAIL.
HMPH. IT'S A LETTER FROM HAWTHORNE. HE NEVER WRITES LETTERS. HOW THOUGHTFUL.
HE MAILED ME A SLICE OF BACON.
BE STRONG.
http://www.slagoon.com
1-17

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


WANNA PWAY TWACTORS, ZOE?
I AM A GIRL, AND GIRLS DON'T PLAY WITH TRACTORS!
WANNA PWAY TWACTORS, MOM?
OKAY.
HEY!
SHE'S NOT A GIRL. SHE'S A MOM.
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Bernadette Peters, Mario Andretti, Gavin MacLeod, Elisa Fiorillo, John Turturro, Tangi Miller

Happy Birthday: Take it easy, and you can have whatever you want as long as you don't force issues. Good fortune will be yours as long as you project a helpful, giving image. Competition can be expected, but if you are steadfast, winning should not be that difficult. You will see your opponent clearly must be strategic in implementing your game plan. Your numbers: 13, 17, 33, 36, 41, 45

ARIES (March 21-April 19): You will explode if you are forced to deal with relatives who don't see your point of view. Make financial investments with extreme caution.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Make your plans carefully and be sure to include the one you love. Travel for business or pleasure will bring successful results.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Opportunities to get ahead financially are evident. Your luck will run high. Taking advantage of moneymaking investments will prove lucrative. Follow your instincts and pursue your dreams.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Social events will lead to romantic encounters. Your compassionate nature will win the heart of someone in need of your sensitive nurturing. Be careful not to let anyone take advantage of you.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Put in some overtime and get ahead in your work. Concentrate on your career objectives and try to avoid conflicts with jealous co-workers. You can expect a family member to be unpredictable.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You need to put your talents on display. Don't be afraid or too shy to show others how valuable you are. You'll be surprised how many people are willing to pay for your work.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Property investments will be fruitful, but don't be pushed into joint financial ventures with someone who is not completely trustworthy.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Sudden romantic infatuations may throw you for a loop. Take your time if you wish things to work in your favor. Be honest and direct for best results.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Put your efforts into your career. You will accomplish the most if you are willing to present your ideas and follow through on your promises.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): You can make physical changes to enhance your appearance today. Get into a fitness routine, or start working on that new image you've wanted to project.

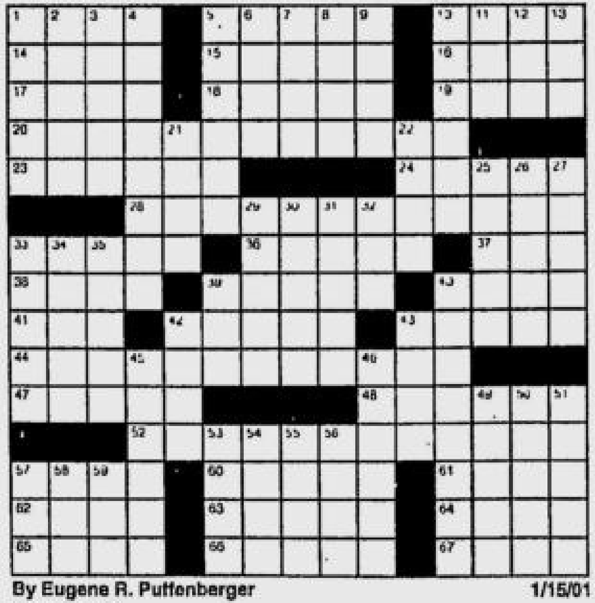
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Self-improvement should be your prime concern today. Look into ways to change your look, or expand your awareness in such a way that you attain your goals or attract individuals who will benefit you.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Your temper will flare out of hand if someone threatens your principles. Avoid confrontations at group meetings. Put your efforts into helping those who need and want your assistance.

Birthday Baby: No one is likely to push you into doing anything that you don't want to do. You are strong-willed, engaging and will be admired. Your determined nature will lead to loyal friends and vehement opponents.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.com



By Eugene R. Puffenberger
Houston, TX

1/15/01

ACROSS
1 From
5 Authority to decide
10 Moves to the beat
14 Enthusiastic opinion
15 Trapped in the branches
16 __ Roberts University
17 Caspian feeder
18 Word before X
19 Depend
20 Bojangles
23 Beset
24 Smallest possible
28 Star of the 1960 Olympics
33 Greek colonnades
36 Ere
37 Fabrication
38 Unclear
39 Irregularly notched
40 Mineo and Maglie
41 Pollution patrol grp.
42 Potpourris
43 Fashion
44 Edison's associate
47 Lebowitz and Tarkenton
48 Brings joy
52 "Giovanni's Room" writer
57 Horn or May
60 Countertenors
61 Cold-cut palace
62 Actor Baldwin
63 Miniature
64 Direct
65 Declaim wildly
66 Sweetheart
67 Back end of a kitchen?

DOWN
1 Netherlands Antilles island
2 Indira's clothes
3 Racetrack shapes
4 Dropped off
5 Constitutional
6 Part of U.A.E.
7 Abominable snowman
8 Spotted
9 Bookie's numbers
10 Third-largest island
11 Bauxite, e.g.
12 Buddy
13 Slightly shifty
21 Journalist Jacob
22 Ye __ Shoppe
25 Quench
26 Tanker leak
27 "We hold __ truths to be..."
29 "West Side Story" song
30 Underway
31 Martini's partner
32 End of a post?
33 Knickknack spot
34 Come to a point
35 Conductor Seiji
39 Building wing
40 Bestride
42 Greek peak
43 Market
45 Introduce subcutaneously
46 Contemptibly small
49 Nestling's comment
50 Israeli seaport
51 Derogatory
53 Pound to a pulp
54 Pollster Roper
55 Slugger Musial
56 Trunk
57 Automobile
58 Tenn. neighbor
59 Writing tool

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

D	I	S	F	I	G	U	R	E	■	L	O	G	O	S
E	N	E	R	V	A	T	O	R	■	O	R	I	B	I
M	A	L	A	Y	S	I	A	N	■	R	A	V	E	L
O	M	E	N	■	S	C	R	E	E	N	T	E	S	T
N	O	N	■	T	E	A	■	S	W	E	E	N	E	Y
I	R	I	S	E	S	■	A	T	E	■	■	■	■	■
C	A	T	E	R	■	S	K	I	■	T	A	M	P	S
A	T	E	A	M	■	U	R	N	■	A	L	E	U	T
L	A	S	T	S	■	P	O	E	■	L	A	D	L	E
■	■	■	■	■	P	E	N	■	R	E	S	I	L	E
S	H	A	K	I	E	R	■	H	A	S	■	A	S	P
L	I	V	I	N	G	S	T	O	N	■	E	T	O	N
O	P	A	L	S	■	T	O	O	K	A	D	I	V	E
S	P	I	T	E	■	A	D	H	E	S	I	V	E	S
H	O	L	S	T	■	R	O	A	D	S	T	E	R	S

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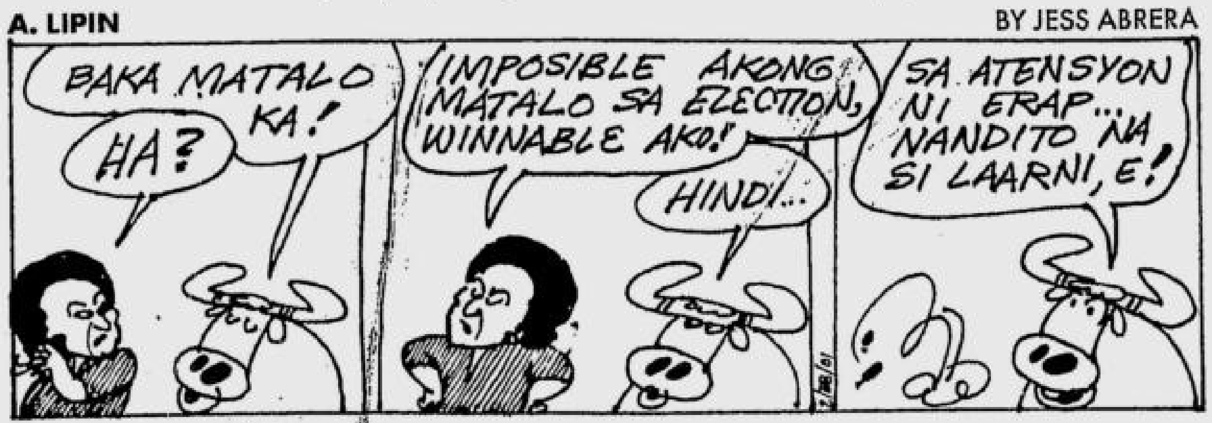
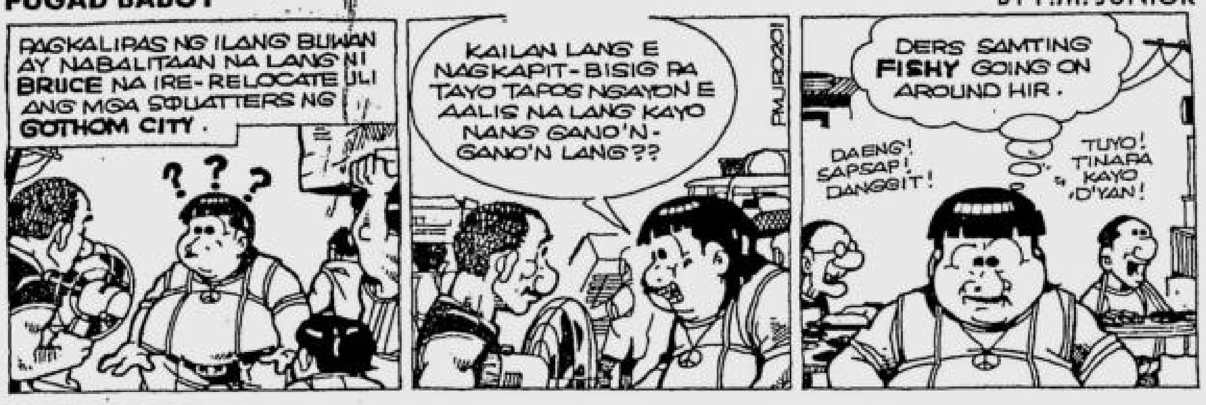
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


BAKA MATALO KA!
HA?
IMPOSIBLE AKONG MATALO SA ELECTION, WINNABLE AKO!
HINDI...
SA ATENSYON NI ERAP... NANDITO NA SI LAARNI, E!
2-28-01

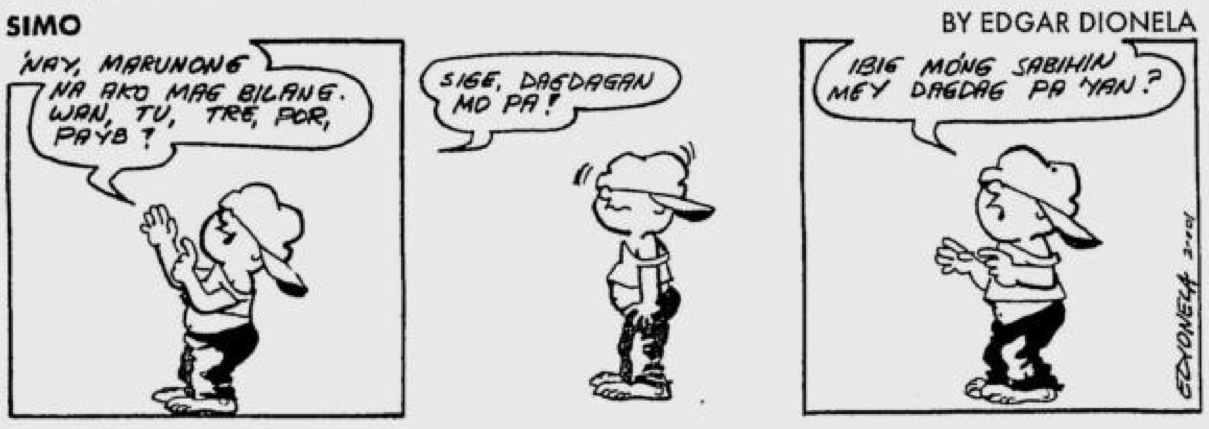
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


PAGKALIPAS NG ILANG BUWAN AY NABALITAAN NA LANG NI BRUCE NA IRE-RELOCATE ULI ANG MGA SQUATTERS NG GOTHOM CITY.
???
KAILAN LANG E NAGKAPIT-BISIG PA TAYO TAPOS NGAYON E AALIS NA LANG KAYO NANG GANO'N-GANO'N LANG??
PMJR2001
DERS SAMTING FISHY GOING ON AROUND HIR.
DAENG! SAPSAP! DANGGIT!
TUYO! TINAPA KAYO D'YAN!

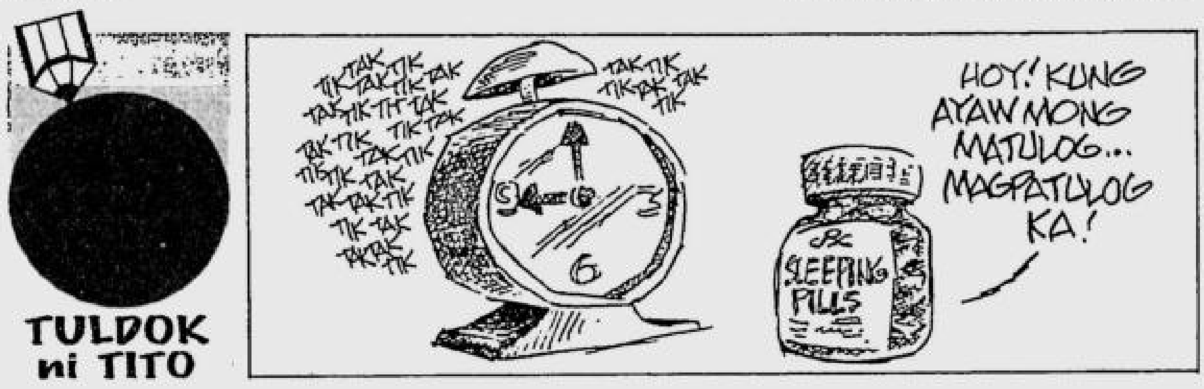
SIMO

BY EDGAR DIONELA


'NAY, MARUNONG NA AKO MAG BILANG. WAN, TU, TRE, POR, PAYB?
SIGE, DAGDAGAN MO PA!
IBIG MONG SABIHIN MEY DAGDAG PA 'YAN?
EDIONELA 2-2-01

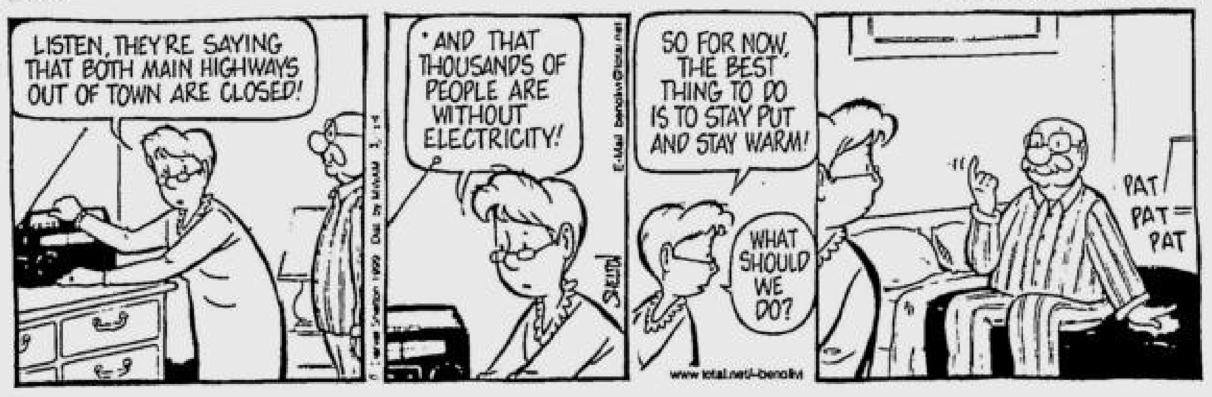
TULDOK

BY PAPU & TATUM MILAMBILING


TULDOK ni TITO
TIK-TAK TIK-TAK TIK-TAK TIK-TAK TIK TAK TIK-TAK TIK-TAK TIK TAK-TAK-TIK TIK-TAK TAK-TAK TIK
TAK-TIK TIK-TAK TAK TIK
HOY! KUNG AYAW MONG MATULOG... MAGPATULOG KA!
SLEEPING PILLS

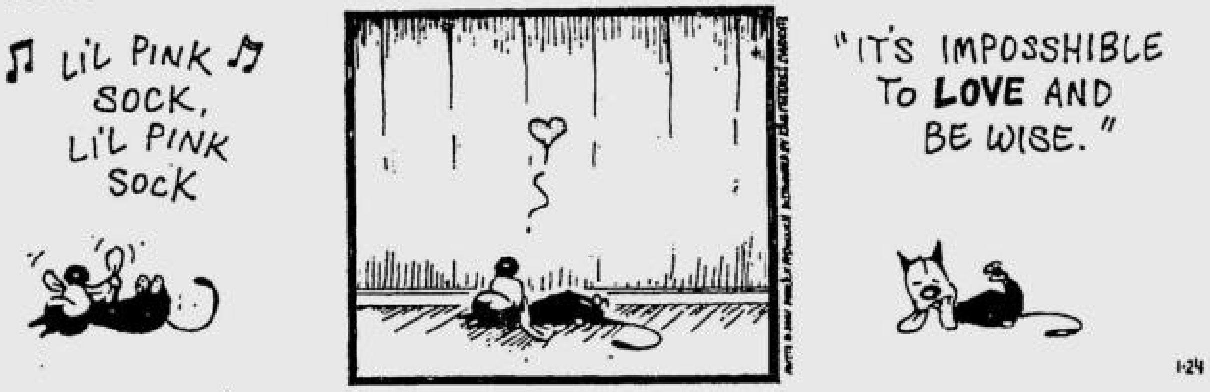
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


LISTEN, THEY'RE SAYING THAT BOTH MAIN HIGHWAYS OUT OF TOWN ARE CLOSED!
"AND THAT THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE ARE WITHOUT ELECTRICITY!
SO FOR NOW, THE BEST THING TO DO IS TO STAY PUT AND STAY WARM!
WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
PAT PAT PAT
www.total.net/~bendkr

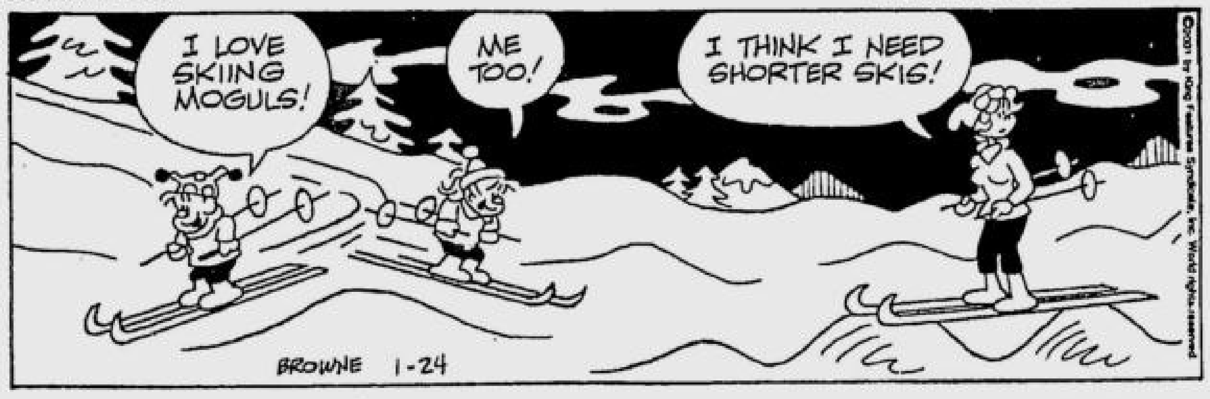
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


♫ LI'L PINK ♫ SOCK, LI'L PINK SOCK
"IT'S IMPOSSHIBLE TO LOVE AND BE WISE."
1-24

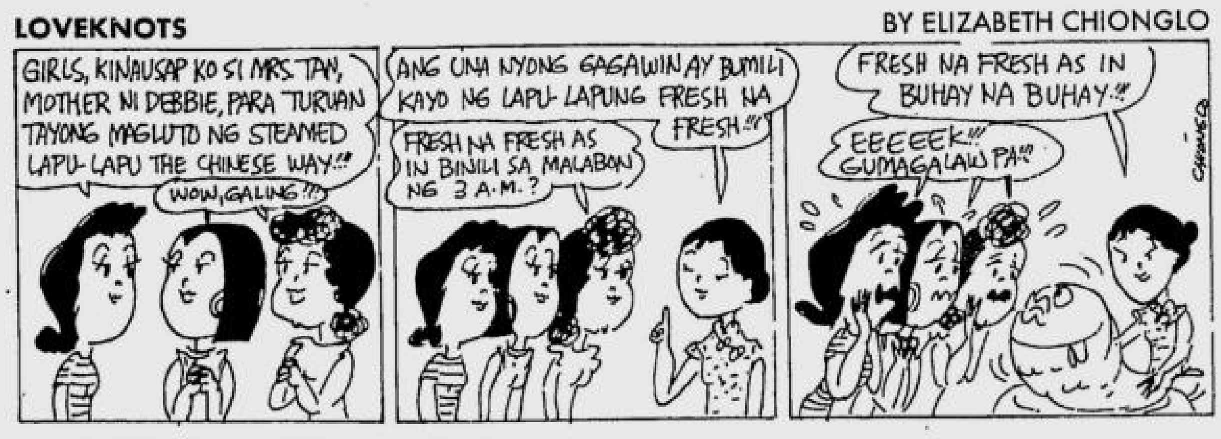
HI AND LOIS

BY BRIAN & GREG WALKER


I LOVE SKIING MOGULS!
ME TOO!
I THINK I NEED SHORTER SKIS!
BROWNE 1-24

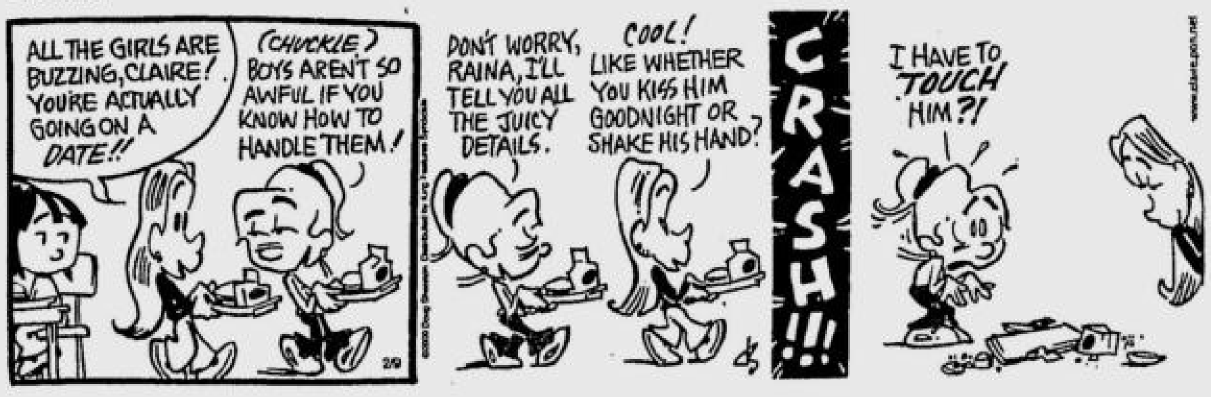
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


GIRLS, KINAUSAP KO SI MRS. TAN, MOTHER NI DEBBIE, PARA TURUAN TAYONG MAGLUTO NG STEAMED LAPU-LAPU THE CHINESE WAY!!
WOW, GALING!!!
ANG UNA NYONG GAGAWIN AY BUMILI KAYO NG LAPU-LAPUNG FRESH NA FRESH!!!
FRESH NA FRESH AS IN BINILI SA MALABON NG 3 A.M.?
FRESH NA FRESH AS IN BUHAY NA BUHAY!!!
EEEEEK!!! GUMAGALAW PA!!!
CHIONGLO

CLAIRE

BY DOUG SHANNON


ALL THE GIRLS ARE BUZZING, CLAIRE! YOU'RE ACTUALLY GOING ON A DATE!!
(CHUCKLE) BOYS AREN'T SO AWFUL IF YOU KNOW HOW TO HANDLE THEM!
DON'T WORRY, RAINA, I'LL TELL YOU ALL THE JUICY DETAILS.
COOL! LIKE WHETHER YOU KISS HIM GOODNIGHT OR SHAKE HIS HAND?
CRASH!!!
I HAVE TO TOUCH HIM?!
2/9

THE AUTHOR (left) with Bettina Enriquez, Monique Buensalido, Andrew Dino and Deng de Guzman

Once upon a snowy Japan

(From page F1)

cause the transport system was efficient, but what made it difficult for me was having to wait for buses and walking in the freezing cold, especially when the temperature was in the negative.

By the following week, my point of view was going to change a lot more.

After I had been going to school for a week, I remembered that before leaving the Philippines for Japan we were told that we would have school for only a week. So I thought my Japanese school days were over. I was wrong. Dead wrong. I had too many expectations, which probably caused my misery.

As it turned out, going to school was my first, last and only activity the whole time I was in Japan. I had to attend school, period. Even on Saturdays. To tell you the awful truth, I had more school days there than the students here did in January, what with People Power II happening while I was there. Which brings me to my biggest regret.

My friends here know how much I've always wanted to join protests but never got the chance. If you only knew how much I wanted to attend the rallies and take part in history! It really broke my heart they were able to take part in Edsa II and I wasn't. And all because I was in some far away place where in the beginning I thought I would be the better for it.

And what exactly did I do in school? Sit and stare and pretend I understood the lessons in Japanese. I was rotting in the classroom like a big pile of horse manure for a month.

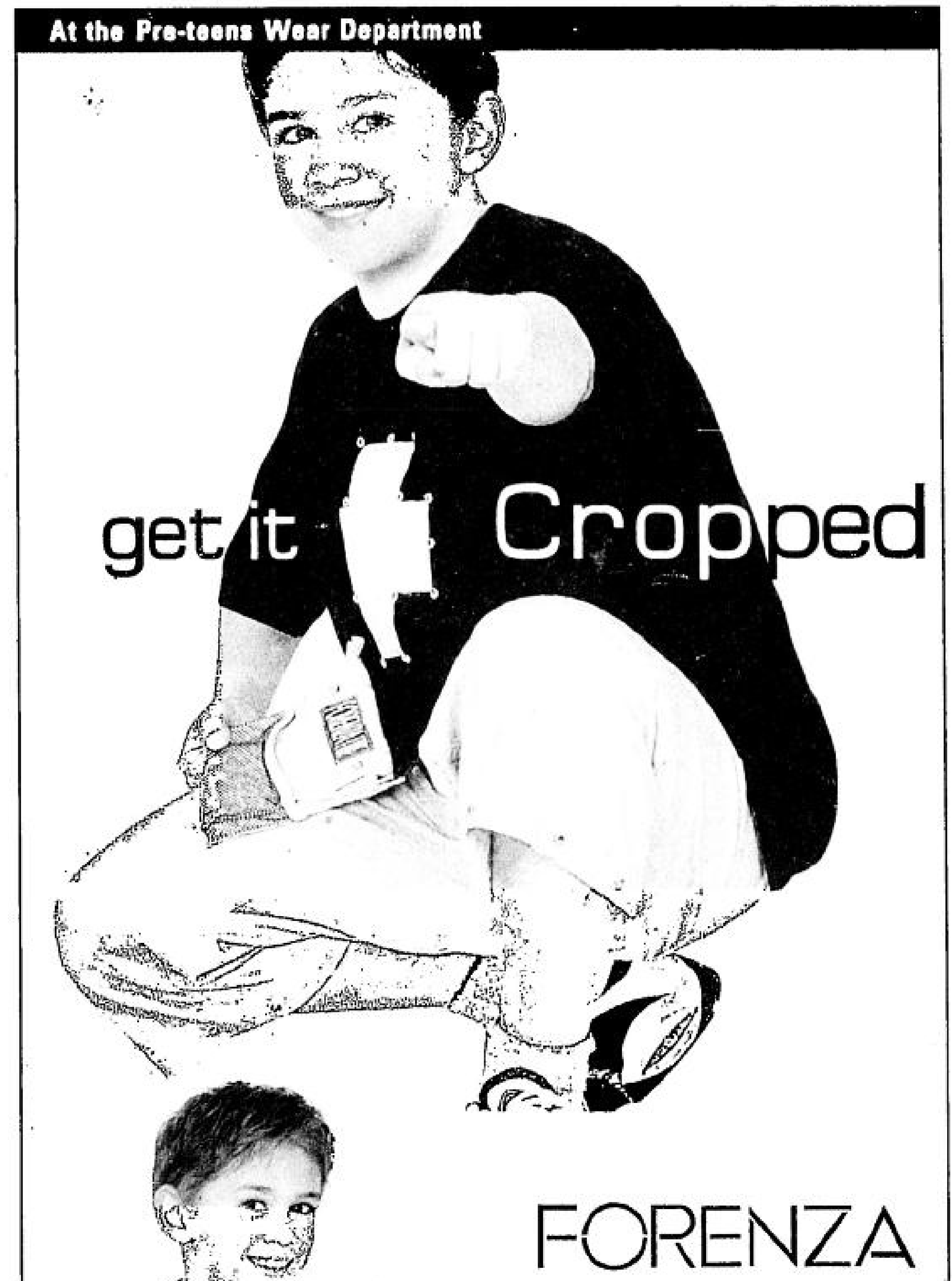
But then again, it wasn't all bad. I did feel some kind of genius back there. I had never been so flattered in my young life. You would be flattered too if people said you were a genius or "You are a human dictionary." At home, I was just an ordinary student with ordinary abilities.

Feeling isolated

As for my home life in Japan, well, I'd like to be polite but at the same time honest. I made the effort to talk to my family but mostly it was really hard. Good thing they had a translation feature in their computer. But I felt embarrassed whenever they wanted to say something and they had to keep turning on their computer. And they wasted so much ink.

What was worse was the translations were so crooked and super "*barok*," sometimes senseless. But the translations were really funny. I had to control myself from laughing. Most of the time I would just keep quiet because I felt they wouldn't understand anyway, and it would be too much of a bother. The feeling of isolation was inevitable. It almost drove me insane that I only had myself to talk to. I learned that, indeed, silence is deafening.

ONCE/ p.F4



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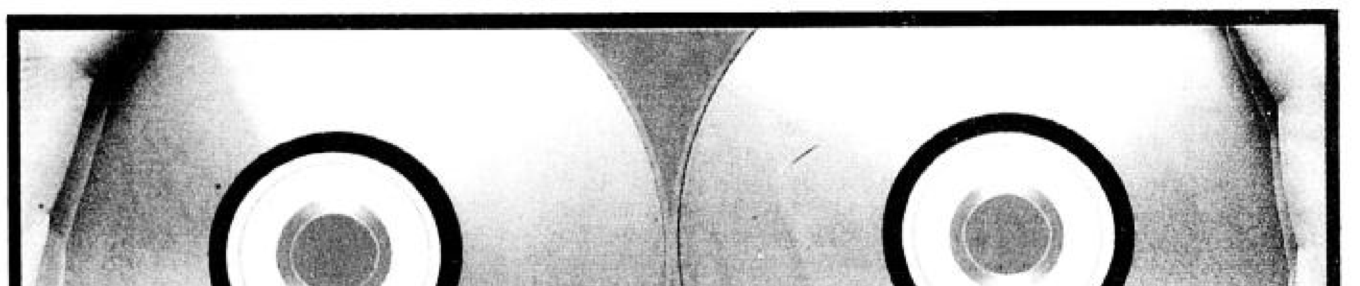

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Once upon a snowy Japan

(From page F3)

What I didn't like about my host father was that he was such a heavy smoker. I didn't mind his heavy drinking for as long as he maintained his distance. I had stated that I couldn't stand having people who smoke around me but I still was placed with this family and there was nothing to do but endure it.

Of all the things that happened in my home stay that fueled my fire it was that they opened a letter addressed to me behind my back. It was clearly stated who it was for. I could have let them read its contents, all they needed to do was ask.

My host family didn't take me anywhere except school and the department store. If I hadn't asked maybe they wouldn't have taken me at all. A trip to Mt. Fuji was also rejected because of our geographical location. Tokyo Disneyland was miles away as well.

I was really glad that there was a YFU-supervised tour in Nikko City or I would have probably gone mad. If it weren't for that tour, I wouldn't have seen anything besides snow-covered hills. My host family was very kind though and that I cannot argue with.

When I got to see my YFU Filipino friends again, I felt so darn happy. Finally, I could speak Tagalog! Finally I could talk to people who could really understand me. Finally, too, my eyes were opened to reality—or was it bad luck? It was bad enough I lived far from civilization, if you know what I mean, and I was always the last to arrive at YFU meetings and gatherings, causing me so much embarrassment. But I also found out that while the other Filipinos had other exchange students from the other countries living in the same areas where they lived, I was all by myself in far and snow-covered Tochigi-ken, with a host family that barely spoke English. Also, among the five of us, I was the only one who had to go to school all of four weeks; the others started school about the second or third week and went for just four or five days.

I know this was an exchange student scholarship program but it wasn't supposed to turn out like that. When I tried to do something about my situation by telling a higher authority, nothing happened. Nothing happened—that is just what saddens me. For the first time, I broke out of my shell and tried to do something which I ought to and nothing happened. But I am proud of myself for doing that. It may be no big deal to you but for me it is.

I just think there's some unfairness when out of 20 exchange students, I was the only one who was sent to an isolated place and had to go to school for a month, and it wasn't even an international school like the other YFU scholars attended.

I thought that there would be something more about this trip than school. Sometimes I wished I were deaf when my friends started comparing their wonderful encounters. I had nothing to share. I tried to look at the brighter side of life but it seemed like life wouldn't look at me.

Nobody had forced me to join the YFU. I made the decision to become an exchange student because I thought this would improve my oral and social skills. I have always been a quiet person most of the time—a loner even—and I thought that through this program, I would be able to interact with different kinds of people. Academics were not really my main objective. I didn't think the YFU exchange program was more for an academic purpose because we were only to stay in Japan for a month. How much could you learn in a classroom in that time if you couldn't speak, read or understand Japanese?

PUTTING up peace signs with my classmates

YUKO and I baked cookies! Yeah, they were good.

STANDING in front of a temple

Learning about life

Do I regret all the awful things that happened to me? I am thankful for having undergone all that because it taught me so much. I learned so much more than I expected to. What happened to me has made me a stronger person. I was exposed to difficulties that I had never gone through before. Someday I'll be laughing at the times when I had to endure all that cigarette smoke or had to walk in rain or snow.

I learned how justice sometimes sleeps. I learned not to expect too much because it would lead to disillusion. I actually consider myself less a loner now but I also feel more emboldened to rebel against any injustice. My eyes were fully opened for the first time. I learned the reality of life itself. Sometimes I think I was placed in that far-away home because nobody else wanted me. Too emotional? As my favorite wrestler would say, "Oh hell, yeah!"

I will never forget my visit to Japan. I'd be a fool if I did.

What to do with your old clothes

MakeOver 911

Kinny Salas

THE ULTIMATE dream is to open your closet and be able to wear everything in it. Reality is, opening your stuffed closet only to find out you have close to nothing to wear.

What to do with those you don't need is the easy part. You either give them away to goodwill or start a garage sale. The difficult part is identifying what you don't need and what to keep. Set one day to sort things out with a big empty *balikbayan* box beside you to toss the undesirables.

What don't you need?

- Anything that doesn't fit you properly. If it's too small, forget the idea you are going to lose weight and wow everyone like you used to. When you do lose the weight, reward yourself with new clothes. Those you have in stock will be out of style by then. If it's too big, you don't really want to grow back into them, do you?
- Any style or color that simply does nothing for your figure or coloring. Fit them individually and stick the colors beside your clean, scrubbed face. If it makes you look plain or dumpy no matter how great your figure is, toss it in the box. Do not rationalize by saying the right makeup will make the color work for you, because if it requires that much effort it is not meant.
- A style too identified with a particular era. The '80s may be back but ditch all punk, New Wave, acid ash, major shoulder pads, colored stockings, lacy ankle socks, etc. That goes for their overkill accessories like the dangling huge earrings and studded belts. Include funky materials like faux leather, plastic, rubber and fishnet clothing.
- Beyond repair items—jeans ripped at the butt, clothes with holes, threadbare, frayed at the edges, stockings with runs on wrong color. This goes for worn-out socks, underwear, nightgowns, shoes and bags.
- Anything you have not touched for nearly a year. If you haven't found an occasion to wear it, you never will. These include the slinky or office dresses you've been saving.
- Look your age. If you were old enough to wear the revival dresses when they were originally introduced, especially the bare midriffs and spandex ones, you are too old for them now. Chances are your body will not be the same. Drop the baby doll dresses, thigh-high tights and schoolgirl plaid minis if you are over 25 because you are not fooling anybody.
- Be less sentimental. Okay, for posterity's sake keep one high school uniform and your wedding gown, that's it. Toss the cheerleader uniform, bridesmaid dresses, prom dresses, especially the frou-frou ones with too much ruffles and lace.
- Be ruthless with shoes and bags. For the all-time favorite accessories, the above rules apply. If they are beyond repair, too tacky or do not fit your personality at all, toss them in the pile. Shoes are especially hard to part with, so let me help: gladiator sandals, thigh-high boots, combat boots, bright-colored stilettos, especially patent! White shoes, unless they're sneakers or a nurse's regulation shoe, platform sneakers, anything that fits badly.
- Pack your travel coats in a separate closet or in a labeled trunk so you know where to look for them when you need them, but they don't clutter the cabinet.

You will notice a much roomier closet with just the necessities. How does one know they are holding on to the right things? There are always staples and classics. The prerequisite is they fit well and are in good condition.

- Button-fly blue jeans—old or new except those that are ripped on revealing places.
- Most black or khaki bottoms and tops, except fishnet shirts and off-shoulder sweats or too ultra padded.
- White tops—polo shirt, blouses, T-shirts, etc.
- Walking shorts in neutral colors.
- Rain jackets with hood, sweaters and tank tops.
- Dad's or husband's boxers—for hanging out in the house or the beach.
- Slip dresses—flatters most body types, comfortable and easy to wear, this will be around for a long time.
- T-shirts—you can never have enough for sleeping, loafing around and working out.

For any questions, or products you want to road-test, write to Makeover 911, PDI Lifestyle or fax at 897-4805

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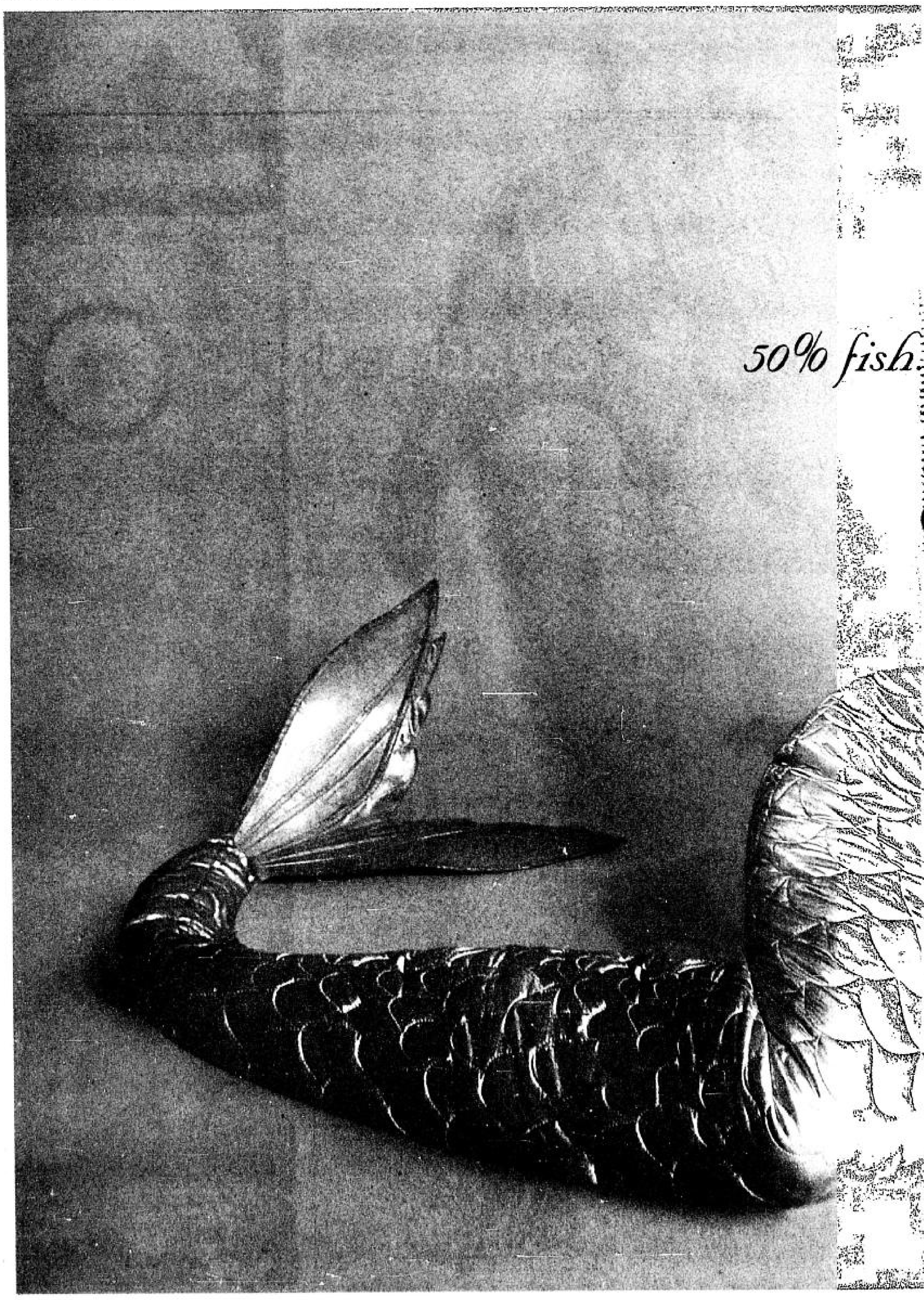

Without a doubt, 'Hannibal' is a well-presented dish, but it lacks the emotional and psychological depth of its predecessor

Not quite the feast that the first one was

By Alexis L. Loinaz

REVIEW

IF movies are supposed to provide food for thought, then "Hannibal," the much-anticipated big screen follow-up to 1991's "The Silence of the Lambs," takes that maxim literally and cooks it up for all it's worth.

After all, few fictional characters have made depravity more delicious than Hannibal "The Cannibal" Lecter, the brilliant but mad psychiatrist from Thomas Harris' best-selling novels who likes to create entrées out of ears and lunch out of livers. Elegant and unfathomably evil, Dr. Lecter brings new dimension to the antihero: He's one of the few truly despicable characters whom we actually end up rooting for.

In 1992, Oscar voters ended up rooting for him, too. That year, "The Silence of the Lambs" became the third film in history to sweep all five major Academy Awards, including best picture, best director, best adapted screenplay and best acting honors for leads Anthony Hopkins and Jodie Foster.

With such a pedigree, audiences have been more than hungry for a sequel. And, at least on paper, "Hannibal" looks appetizing: It boasts Hopkins, reprising his charming Dr. Lecter; a white-hot director ("Gladiator's" Ridley Scott); a critically acclaimed actress (Julianne Moore, stepping into the role of FBI agent Clarice Starling after Foster passed); and a script by two celebrated writers (legendary playwright David Mamet and Steve Zaillian, who won an Oscar for adapting "Schindler's List").

JULIANNE Moore as Clarice Starling

Revenge

Without a doubt, "Hannibal" is a well-presented dish. But unfortunately, the movie looks yummier than it actually is. Overall, "Hannibal" lacks the emotional and psychological depth of its predecessor and seems to have relegated the complex relationship between Dr. Lecter and Clarice to the sidelines—quite a tragedy considering it was the enigmatic erotic-paternal interplay between the two that made "Silence" so unbelievably riveting.

Because of this, "Hannibal" is reduced to a cat-and-mouse chase of a movie. And although it has many engaging (and gory) moments, I couldn't help but feel that as a whole, "Hannibal" became just another "serial killer flick."

Ten years after the events in "Silence," an incognito Dr. Lecter is being hunted down by the perverse Mason Verger (played by a totally unrecognizable Gary Oldman). Verger is the only known survivor among Dr. Lecter's victims and has the scars to show for it: In a fit of drug-induced dementia, he was convinced by Dr. Lecter to cut off his face and remains horribly disfigured, with no eyelids and a mouth that collapses unto itself.

To exact his revenge, he lures Clarice Starling back to Lecter's case and places a bounty on the doctor's head. But even Clarice shows some battle scars: she is now a jaded and disgraced agent unfairly blamed for a botched drug raid. Still, she and Dr. Lecter share a strange, symbiotic relationship and if there's anyone who can enter the mind of this gentrified cannibal, it is Clarice.

From Florence, Italy to Washington, D.C., Clarice, Verger and a host of his cohorts—including a shady justice department official named Paul Krendler (played by Ray Liotta) and a greedy Italian investigator (played by Giancarlo Gianinni)—try to keep up with Dr. Lecter. But the harder they try, the quicker the lines blur between the hunter and the hunted, culminating in a one-of-a-kind dinner party that will make your stomach turn.

Gothic reverie

Because expectations run so high for "Hannibal," the film has to work doubly hard to earn its keep. This it does earnestly, with director Scott drawing on his considerable experience and expertise as an apocalyptic visionary (he also directed the dark "Blade Runner" and the stark "Aliens"). Here, he bathes "Hannibal" in a kind of gothic reverie—from Verger's medieval estate to the brooding cobblestone streets of Florence to Dr. Lecter's stately home.

But while "Hannibal" does a fine job of establishing a foreboding atmosphere, its narrative fails to fully develop the film's characters or their relationships with one another. There is, for one, a brief flashback that explains how Verger mutilated himself at the behest of Dr. Lecter, but it does little to establish the circumstances behind it.

There is also the character of Krendler who—as the movie progresses—plays an increasingly important role. Yet he remains sadly one-dimensional and the film does little to elevate him past the token "bad guy" role in the same way that "Silence" allowed Dr. Lecter to transcend the "serial killer" stereotype.

Then there is the role of Clarice, which is just a notch above that of a supporting character. Here, she pops up intermittently to move the plot along, but her involvement seems more incidental than essential. Watching "Hannibal," it's clear why Foster turned down the role; after a meaty turn in "Silence," "Hannibal's" Clarice seems like a dramatic leftover. In Foster's place, we get a rather morose Moore doing a pretty bad southern drawl—not the same luminous actress who dazzled us in "The End of the Affair" and "Boogie Nights."

While Clarice may have been marginalized, there is no doubt that Dr. Lecter is the real star of this film, and Hopkins chews up his scenes with grotesque gusto (you can practically hear him relish all the juicy lines he delivers). In fact, the best parts of the movie are when we don't know exactly what he's cooking up, and we end up waiting in horrific anticipation for him to serve us course after morbid course.

Cultivated carnage

Nowhere else is this more chilling that in the movie's gruesome finale—one that definitely gives new meaning to the phrase "food for thought" and one that will surely have audiences losing their heads. While that scene is in keeping with Dr. Lecter's air of cultivated carnage, I personally felt that its schlock-shock sensibilities were—pardon the pun—a bit much to digest.

Despite this, audiences are eating up "Hannibal." The movie rang in $58 million in its opening weekend in North America, making it the third best opening in history (behind "The Lost World" and "The Phantom Menace") and the biggest for a rated-R film. With such impressive numbers, you can be sure that Dr. Lecter will be back to take a hearty bite out of the box office once again.

Hopefully, that future offering will improve upon the rather unsteady "Hannibal." While the movie does have its hair-raising moments, some of its characterizations remain weak and the lack of psychological foreplay between Clarice and Dr. Lecter betrays the kinship they've built in "The Silence of the Lambs."

So, yes, it might seem like a sumptuous cinematic buffet. But [illegible]g of "Hannibal" leaves a funny aftertaste.

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Jollibee

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BRIT POP meets military. Chunchie Soller and Chat room's Caloy Garchitorena

GOLDEN GLAM. Sari-Sari's sexy statements on the city's freshest models

PIMPIN' DADDY. Artists Markus Maguigad and Ronald Pasion

UP, UP AND AWAY. Paolo Raymundo is today's hottest edge wear designer

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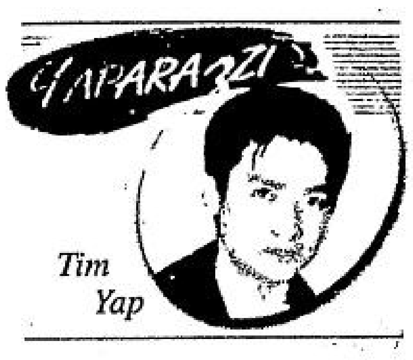
PEOPLE like us. Plus One, other boy band having a bad hair day.

Rebirth for the senses



With a cornucopia of events, we have to focus on the fundamentals and live each waking moment to the fullest

THAT was how mainstream music giant MTV called their re-launch party at The Fort to celebrate their move to UHF Channel 41.

Entering the venue, I was blinded by the flashbulbs clicking away by the door. I was pushed toward a group of tall white guys—all of a sudden, more camera explosions erupted facing our direction. I asked my friend, NBC PR **Tina Tinio**, "Who are these guys?"

I claim ignorance when it comes to pop music. I only know **Britney** and **Christina, Madonna** and **Mariah**. The last cheesy favorite song of mine was way back college, when I used to hum "Heaven Knows" (the love song, starts with—"She's always on my mind...) on the way to campus. Outside the bars and clubs, I value peace and quiet.

"That's Collective Soul behind you, and that's Plus One—another boy band," she said, while taking my snapshot at the tamed male versions of the Spice Girls. They turned out to be nice guys—none of those "Duh-uh, dudes" that would come to mind when you hear the words "boy band."

In between their talks, which ranged from hip hotels and bad hair days, the music channel's executives took turns in delivering speeches. Senatorial aspirant lawyer **Francis Pangilinan** also graced the function on GMA's behalf.

Newest addition

"NBC's partnership with MTV will bring youth entertainment to a whole new level here in the Philippines," **Francis Lumen**, the main man behind NBC and now, MTV, beamed with pride on the latest feather on his trimedia cap. I also spotted philanthropist **Manny Pangilinan** grinning from ear to ear in the front row.

Then, the VJs came out—**Donita Rose, KC Montero** and **Belinda Panelo**—plus the newest addition to their posse, **Sarah Meier**—were clad in cyber-age suits that would make you want to scream, "Shazam!" They had silver crescents painted on one side of the face, which was supposed to go with the "biotechnology" theme for the night.

The guests at the Tent's private party were a smorgasbord of corporate yuppie types and advertising executives. They all fell in line for a grease-fest of mozzarella sticks, onion rings, chicken strips and chips.

The best part of the setup were the art booths on the left side, with creative works by young artists **Epy Quizon, Raymund Lauchengco, Ronald Pasion** and **William Yu**. Their photographs, paintings and installations gave new life to the event. There were also face and body painters, and henna and tattoo artists. Techies had a grand time doing counterstrike and arcade treats outside.

Hip parade

Then, the show began. **Douglas Nierras'** Powerdance gave an electrifying performance complete with fluid body movements, painted nude tights and floor-to-ceiling hydraulics, reminiscent of Cirque du Soleil grandiosity. This was followed by a frou frou fashion parade of Sari-Sari, which displayed golden glam, and Milkwear, which unleashed Spring-Summer 2001's top trends, from the schoolboy-look to military to punk. Standouts were **Paolo Raymundo** and **Kushti's** edgy funk designs.

A free outdoor concert at The Fort grounds followed, with top names in Philippine entertainment on top billing. A 15,000-strong crowd was reported to have partied all night long.

Well, whatever people say about it, heaven knows, "there is only ONE MTV."

Seize the moment

So what's up for us bats this week? Tonight is hip-happening hotspot Il Ponticello's second year anniversary. It also opens its own version of the Roman food festival. The "Roman toga" costume party gates open at 8 p.m. for a night of decadent drinking and food binging (Ponti pizzas are to-die-for)—so gods and goddesses, get ready to party!

Before that, I.O. (yes, Virginia, that vivacious videoke hangout) launches the "I.O. School of Music" with the Philippine Madrigal Singers, also tonight. Cocktails are at 6 p.m., so grab those microphones and start vocalizing.

Tomorrow, Thursday, Smirnoff Mule presents Renaissance 2001 World Tour featuring next in line DJ god **Timo Maas** from Germany. Seveneight Orange's gates open at 9 p.m., with guests **Manolet Dario** and **Bobet Villaluz** cospinning. A not-to-be-missed funky DJ event.

Friday, a hip parade of Milkwear mania takes place at the store's Rockwell Power Plant grounds. The show features the scene's hot and hip set in outfits by fashion's new guard. Trendspotting talent and a whole lot more.

Essences, that new age-y store of Rustan's, hosts their weekly gathering of the city's beautiful set for wine, martinis and much, much more.

Muletopia

Then Saturday, March 3, all roads lead to Mas Y Mas as revelers are given a chance to enter party heaven—"Ibiza!," Smirnoff Mule's Muletopia final party with DJs **Angelo Villanueva** a.k.a. Super-model Diva, **Erwin Edralin, Elmer Dado** and **Cyril Santos** and other surprise guest music meisters. Fire, wind, water and copper are this party's elements that will give you that high.

The following Tuesday, March 6—a double whammy of a night as **Amanda Griffin** launches her very own Tabu swimwear via a celebrity bikini march at bar Stars, 8 p.m. Tickets at P350. (***See related story below and call 0919-3566169 for tickets.***) Hurry up before they get all sold out!

Then, it's bar royalty Venezia's sizzling anniversary party also this coming Tuesday night. This Makati night spot has been up and around, so let's all toast to its reign—as night life pioneer and Bacchanalian hub.

Had enough? It's just the beginning. Get ready for more—"baptize your senses and seize this fertilizing moment!"

YOGA AND TOGA. Zen radiant Mary Ann Lumen with Thames International's Vivienne Tan.

HEADING northwest. Mons Romulo-Tantoco and Candy Ochoa

SEEN in the streets of Malate during the Joy anniversary. Steve Burns and Jenny Diaz of Raj

VIVA GLAMOUR
LA SCHULZE dons schoolgirl meets glam punk on the way to the ramp.

IT'S in the blood, baby. Tantalizing Tinios—Tina, Mary Ann and Ananda

"I WANT it that waaaaaayyyyyy....." I did it, my waaaayyyyy.... Your columnist with Collective Soul

COOL young turks Mahesh Mirpuri, Raymond Rufino and Jay Suarez

PIRATE PIZAZZ from Benjamin

Amanda Griffin launches own swimsuit line

CHANNEL V VJ Amanda Griffin has her hands full these days. Aside from the numerous modeling and hosting jobs, the country's most promising pouter gets all set to launch her very own swimsuit line.

"Tabu Swimwear is a revolutionary new company that imports designer Swimwear from Australia," says Amanda of her new baby.

Her partner, Isabel Engwa, relates, "Tabu Swimwear imports stylish and resilient swimwear, which is suitable for all Filipina women. The product line provides a collection of Swimwear from bikinis to one pieces to tankinis. Whether she is conservative or outrageous, Tabu Swimwear is for the woman who wants to look and feel her best at the beach."

In time for the sexy summer season, Tabu Swimwear is set to be introduced via a benefit fashion show at Stars Bar and Restaurant. The fashion show entitled "Tabu Behavior," will feature top models parading the line. Segments will feature Bianca Araneta, Angel Jones of Kulay, Studio 23 VJ Tricia Chongbian and Claudine Trillo.

The show will be donating all proceeds to the Little Miracles Foundation for orphans and street children. The Little Miracles Foundation, spearheaded by Araneta, focuses on raising funds for the education of our less privileged younger brothers and sisters.

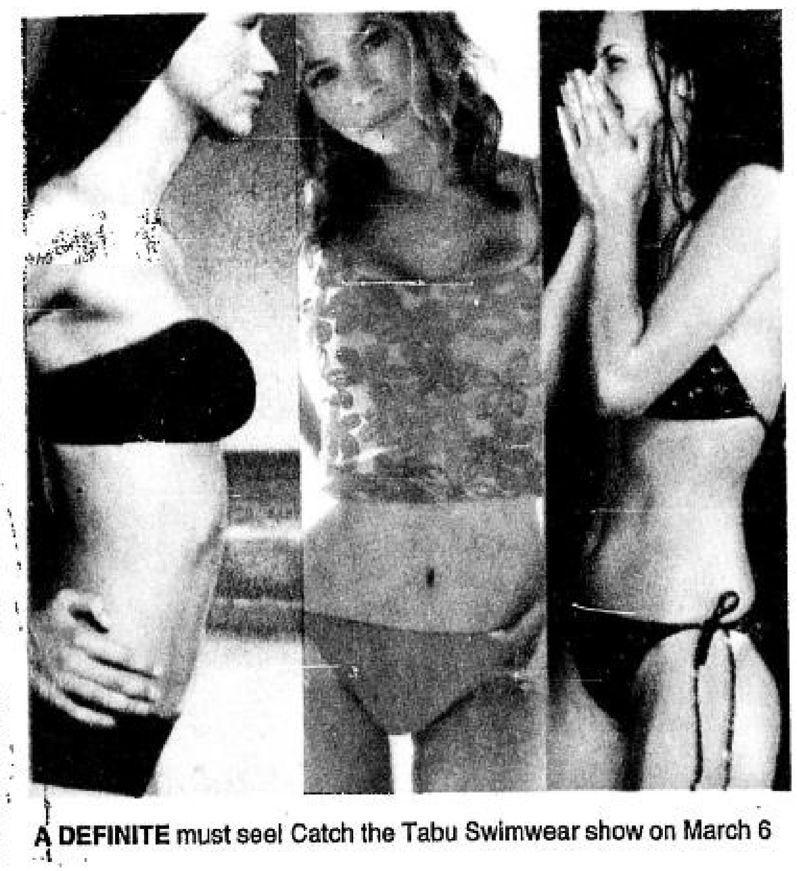
AMANDA Griffin—swims on new waters

Tickets are at P350 for the open bar and cocktails, plus a savvy Summer 2001 swimwear parade. DJ Mumph provides the night's music.

Call Stars or 0919-356 6169...

In the meantime, witness summer's tantalizing "Tabu Behavior." ***Tim Yap***

THE TABU attitude of subtle seduction. Wear It.


A DEFINITE must see! Catch the Tabu Swimwear show on March 6

Defining boundaries with one's date

By Chiquit M. Torrente

REVIEW

I WAS watching "The President on GMA," where President Arroyo recounted how, when First Gentleman Mike Arroyo asked her if she would become his steady, she answered, "Only if we will get married." Now I don't know how accurate that story is, but I thought that would be a good premise for this article.

When I first read "I Kissed Dating Goodbye" by Joshua Harris, I immediately thought this would be a great thing to share with our 2bU readers. But I wasn't sure how to approach it. My guy friends were vehemently opposed to this no-dating principle.

"No dating?" they ask incredulously. "How old-fashioned can that be?"

So before we begin a debate, let's look at the definition of "dating" from the book. "Dating" here does not mean the act of going out on a date. Rather, according to the author, it is "a way of thinking about and approaching romantic relationships." We're talking about the dating game here—going out to casually meet someone you might want to spend some time with, but not necessarily commit to.

As we move forward into this new millennium, as we become more ingrained with Western culture, we lose more of our conservative Filipino values. More and more, today's youth are getting into short-term relationships, throwing caution to the winds. More and more, hearts are being broken and emotional baggage is piling up.

"I Kissed Dating Goodbye" has moved beyond being a book to being a lifestyle motto that has spread like wildfire among America's suburban youth. One of my favorite stories in the book tells of a girl's dream the night before her wedding day. She dreamed that as she and her groom stood before the officiating minister, one girl after another began to walk up to him to hold his hand. Soon six girls were standing next to her groom as he said his wedding vows. As she started to cry, he apologized and explained that although they were all from the past and they meant nothing now, he had given a part of his heart to each of them. "I thought your heart was mine," she said. "It is. Everything that's left is yours," he pleaded.

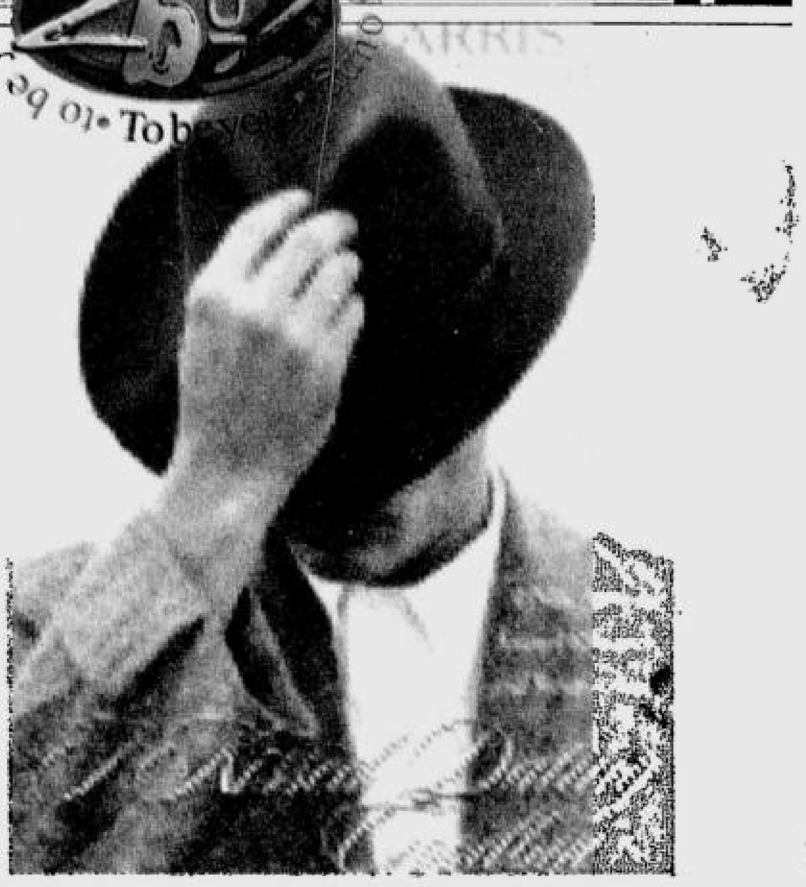
That is just one of the dangers of the casual dating that Western culture celebrates. The book talks about more, such as the physical intimacy that is involved in dating, or isolation from friends the moment you start to seriously date. It talks about "falling in love" versus "choosing to love."

Remember the episode in "Dawson's Creek" where his dad says something like "I chose to love your mother… I can choose to stop loving her"? This book goes farther than that by qualifying a love that we all really deserve, not simply a love we settle for. Plus it discusses how we can guard our hearts against casual infatuation or having "too much, too soon." Issues like what to do instead of dating, becoming the best of you while waiting for God's best for you and having a support group of real close male and female friends who share your values are also discussed.

There's a big difference between playing the dating game, playing by "The Rules: Time-Tested Secrets for Capturing the Heart of Mr. Right" (remember that book that espoused the Maria Clara syndrome?) and living an "I Kissed Dating Goodbye" lifestyle. Whereas the "dating game" puts you out in that jungle where you have to hide your heart under layers of leather, feathers or fur and tons of makeup, and "the rules" tell you to be someone you're not so you can hook your guy, "I Kissed Dating Goodbye" is all about girl power (or guy power, as the case may be). It's about empowering the single youth so you never feel pressured about being part of a "couple" before you're truly ready. It's about helping the youth find your identity before you lose yourself in "couple-dom." It's about going back to values, learning the importance of commitment, and R-E-S-P-E-C-T for friends of the opposite sex.

President Arroyo had the right idea when, at the tender age of 17, she defined her boundaries with the First Gentleman. That may have been 30-odd years ago, but that show of girl power led to marriage with the man who would be willing to give up so much of his life so she could pursue her dreams. Now who wouldn't want a "happily ever after" love story like that?

"I Kissed Dating Goodbye" by Joshua Harris is available at National Bookstore and some Christian bookstores


to be you • to be young • to be
2bU

Athlete puts his best foot forward

ATHLETES are truly in a league of their own. They amaze us with their strength and grace. Who among us hasn't stared in awe at the basketball skills of Allen Iverson? Talent, training and determination have played a role in his success—as well as his Reebok footwear. After all, in basketball, perfect execution depends on precise footwork.

Iverson relies on the Answer IV DMX to steamroll the opposition. These top-of-the-line basketball shoes feature Reebok's renowned DMX technology for comfort and equal load distribution, 3D Ultralite for a natural footstrike and lightweight feel, full-leather upper for comfort and support and a unique lacing system for a custom fit and support. Plus, its midcut design provides added stability and support to prevent those nasty injuries.

ANSWER IV DMX

For every P2,995 purchase of regular-priced footwear gets you a free Reebok Sports Watch.

Karuna opens second store in SM Fairview

KARUNA Collection, the fashion brand known for its line of trendy and basic knitwear and denim jeans for ladies and teens opens its latest freestanding outlet at 1/L SM Fairview today at 2 p.m.

The store opening will coincide with a grand fashion show unveiling Karuna's latest collection at the mall's activity area at 5 p.m.

This new collection promises to be ultra-fresh and cutting-edge, trumpeting a new look and imaging for Karuna.

On March 3, there will be a mallwide sale at SM Southmall and a fashion show at the Mall's atrium area. SM Southmall is the site of Karuna's first freestanding boutique.

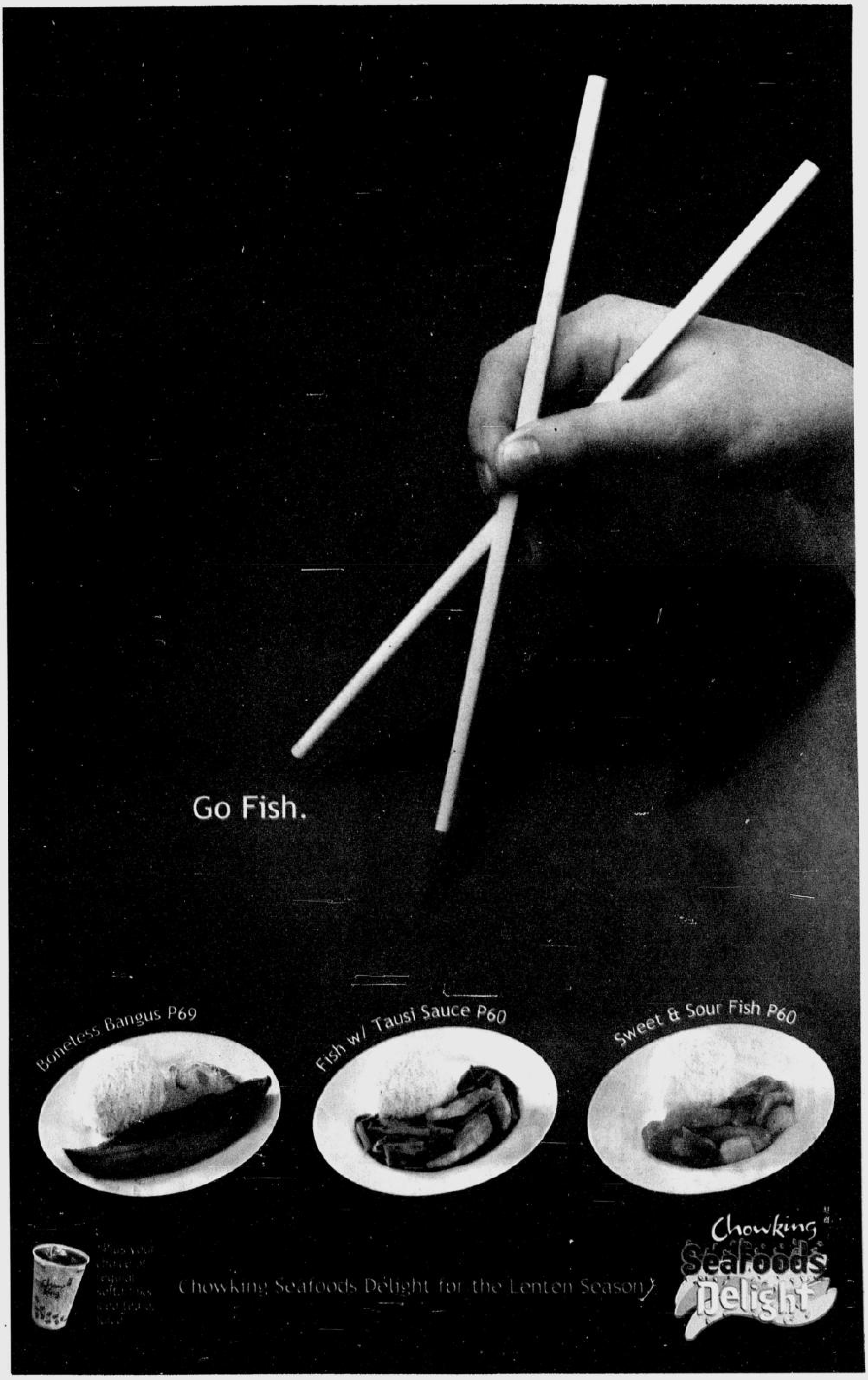


ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

She enters into a relationship but is not serious about it

DEAR Caloy and September,

I am so glad that I read your Feb. 7 issue. I think you are the best guys to ask for advice.

Every time I make a commitment, I end up learning the guy is cheating on me. It hurts 'coz I always give my trust and understanding to that person, accepting the good and the not-so-good in him.

Now, whenever guys court me, I'm insensitive and dry. All the words they say don't mean anything to me at all. Maybe I'm not ready to be in a serious relationship again. Gone is the sensitive and trustful Mae that I once was.

What should I do? Please, I need an honest, sincere and frank answer. I have a boyfriend now but I'm not yet ready to trust again.

MAEC19@YAHOO.COM

CHATROOM

Carlos Garchitorena & September Mahino

Love. No matter how you look at it or hear it, is a four-letter word. Pretty cynical, huh? It is because everyone tries to be a romantic via forwarded text and e-mail that we receive, all promising a union with your "true love."

Pretty simple, really. Just forward this to 10 of your friends. Uh-huh. When was the last time you had your radiation levels checked?

Yes, folks. For years, I've been trying to convince the general public that love doesn't really exist except in the mind of a dreamer. Hormones, I believe. But love?

Admit it or not, we are animals that learn. Some learn exceptionally quick and get a banana to take back to their cages. Others learn more slowly and the electric shock treatment becomes addicting. Some learn to bolt the lab, shake the eggheads off their trail, only to suffer the electric fence in the last stretch to freedom.

A Bio major named Jefferth once told me he was sure a lab rat gave him a look of defiance before it wedged itself in the gears of the stationary wheel, sending years of research down the tubes.

But why do we go on looking? Searching? Waiting for that star to fall right when we need for it to fall? The answer is on the can of regular Coca-Cola during Christmas—commercialization.

Personally, I think our not publishing on Valentine's Day was a master stroke. Down with the Christian calendar and the capitalists that uhm... capitalize on the patron saint of the value meal.

To the baker, let him eat cake. To the florist, decorate your own love with garlands and angel's breath on your own time. To Mae, let love find you and demand that it sweep you off your feet. It may not be the real thing, but enjoy the temporary insanity or not at all. Learn, you animal.

CALOY

My friend once gave me stationery that said, "When in charge, delegate. When in trouble, something something. When in doubt, mumble." Something along those lines... I really just can't remember.

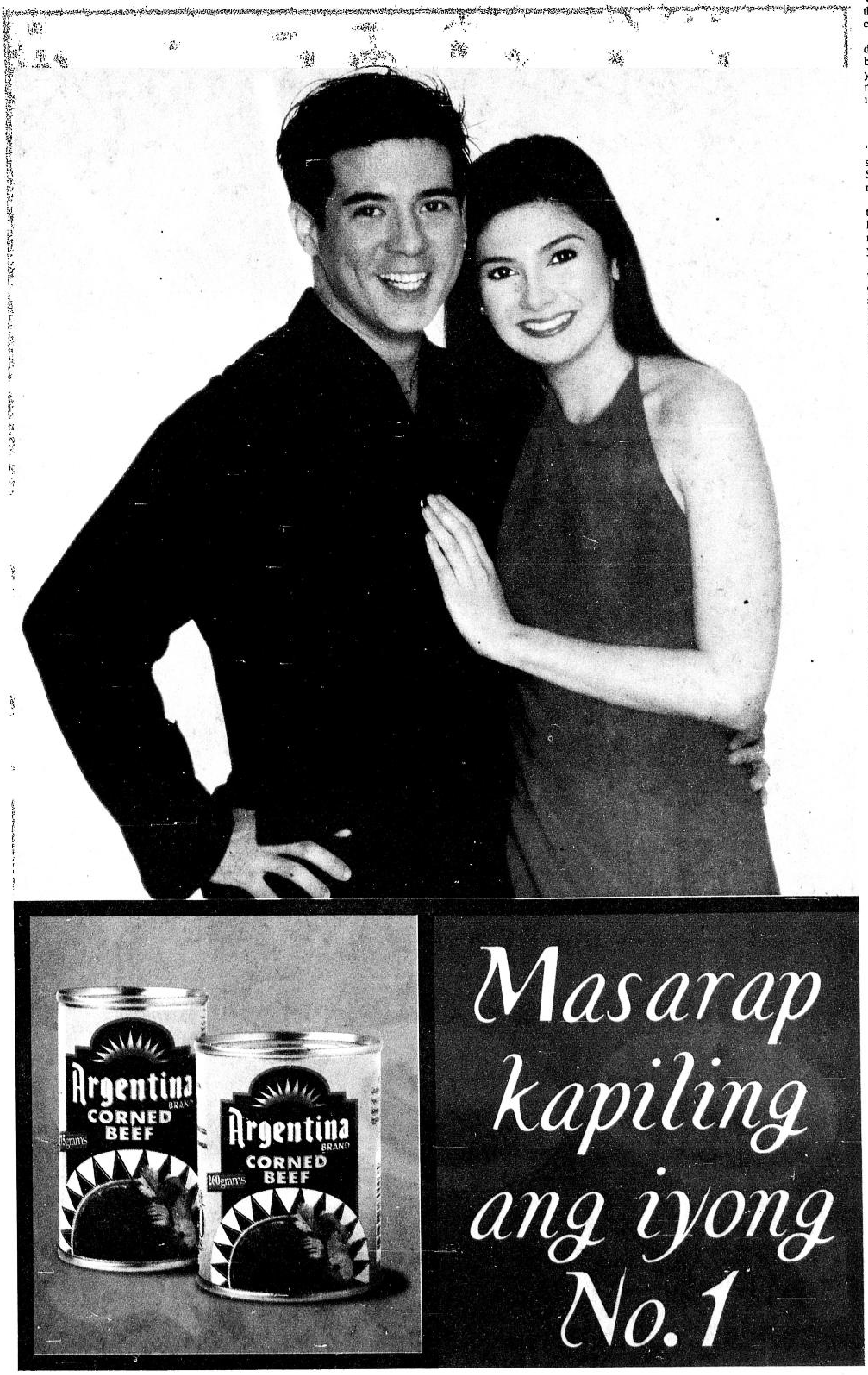
But the point is, if you don't trust yourself or the person you are with in matters concerning love, it's better to ponder about feelings and misgivings and life in general, alone. That way, you would only be worrying about yourself.

Maybe if you don't want to formally break up with him you can traverse the path of "couple cool-off." But whether you do that or actually severe your romantic ties with the boyfriend, the best thing you can do is to spend quality time with yourself. You seem to have been burned by your past loves. Take time to heal and refresh the romantic in you.

Yeah, let love find you. And hopefully, it will be more than just temporary insanity.

SEP

E-mail the authors at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph or write to PDI, Chino Roces Avenue, Makati City.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Masarap kapiling ang iyong No.1

Beyond bubble gum pop and mainstream music

MUSIC videos may be the prime reason people tune in to all-music programs but video jocks, or VJs as they are called today, provide the essential audience connection. MYX, the recently launched music block broadcast over Studio 23 Channel, is proud to say their small assembly of video presenters is as exciting and eclectic, informed and intriguing, daring and diverse as their audience wants them to be.

Meet VJs Kaz, Ed, Clara and John. Put all four together and you can't even place exactly where they came from, what brought them together, their nationalities—much less the personalities behind the names. Logging on to their new jobs officially just as 2001 kicked off, they have begun to receive e-mail, fan mail, text messages from friends—and they have yet to adjust to their celebrity status.

Kaz is actually Karen Castillo, the dusky, curly haired Filipina who did freelance writing for print, content editing online and scriptwriting for music programs before joining the auditions for MYX VJs. The other girl, fairer and long-faced Clara is a Lobregat Balaguer, half-Spanish and half-Pinay, and is also into writing and publishing.

Both studied abroad, Kaz in the United States for a degree in English Literature, and Clara in Navarro, Spain for Communications. Both also write poetry and have actually written stuff together after meeting at MYX.

While Ed used to model a lot—and still does—John is a graphic designer and is also into designing shirts he sells at the alternative fashion store Milkwear. Their common ground: music, of course, though expectedly not the same type. Ed, with his matinee idol looks, is gearing toward being a singer, performing anything from mainstream pop to rather bluesy Lenny Kravitz songs. And John, well, he could play for Ed, handling the guitar, drums and bass pretty well.

All four of them like—or at least try to appreciate—any kind of music with a beat. Which is what MYX, the quartet's new music address, is all about. Studio 23's goal for MYX is to make it a true music authority by representing a broader spectrum of music genres that go beyond bubble gum pop and mainstream.

They know MYX is not really about them. As the music block's minimalist tag goes, "Only music."

MYX airs Mondays to Fridays, 7-11 a.m., 1-7 p.m. and 12:30 a.m.-3 a.m.; and Saturdays and Sundays, 7-11 a.m., 4-6 p.m. and 12 m.n.-3 a.m. over Studio 23.

candy www.candymag.com
Present
TEEN CHAT SERIES
Schedule this week:

Date	Topic
February 28	Teenage pregnancy
March 2	How to be a date diva
March 5	Things I love or hate about school

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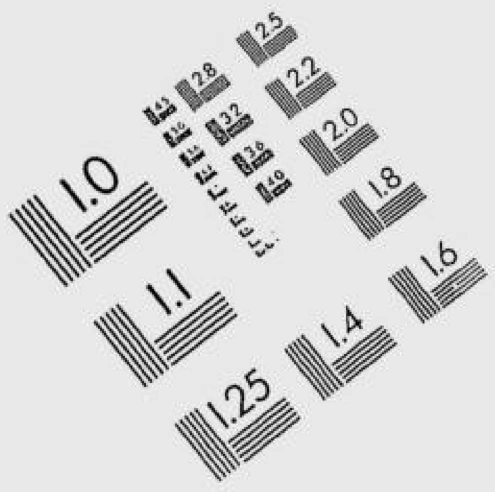
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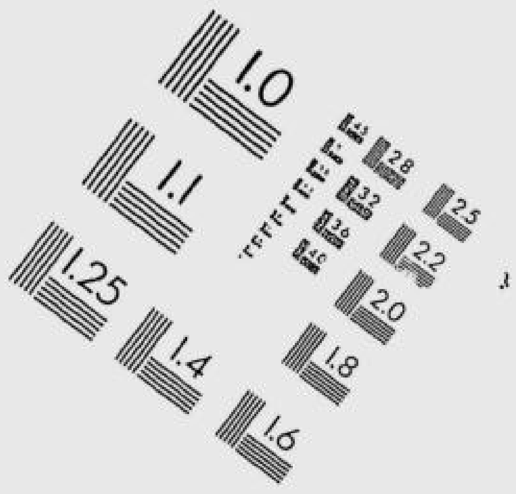
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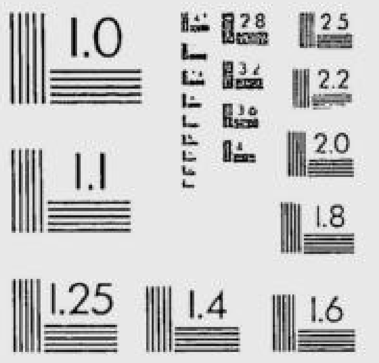
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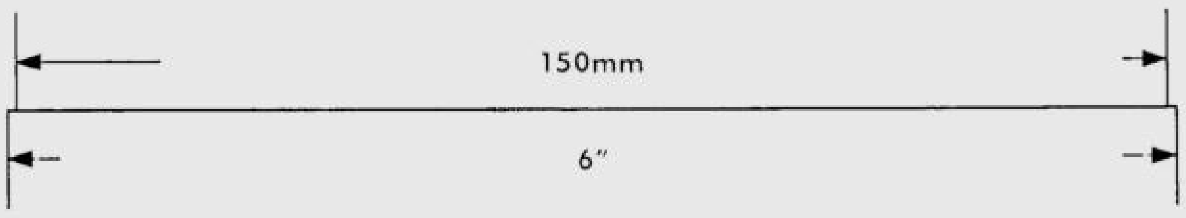

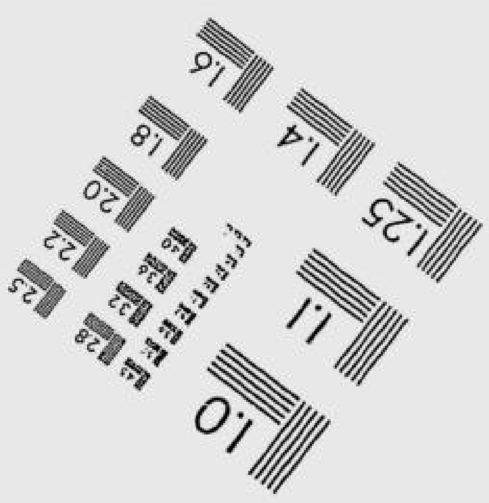
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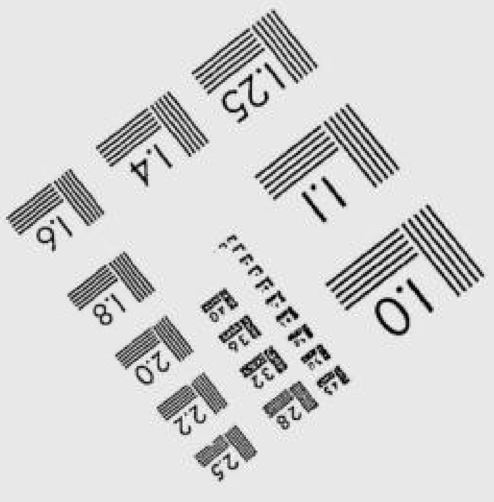
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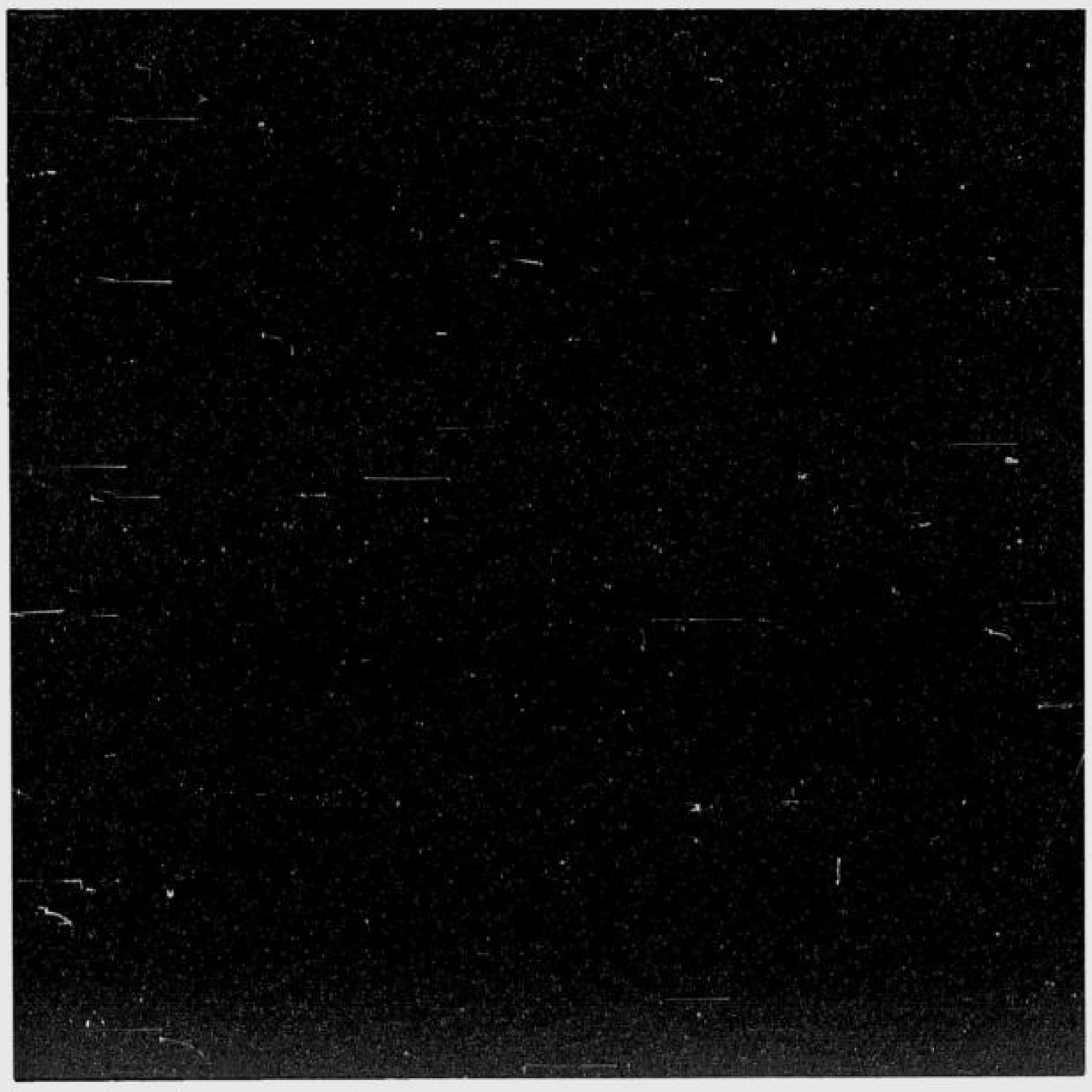

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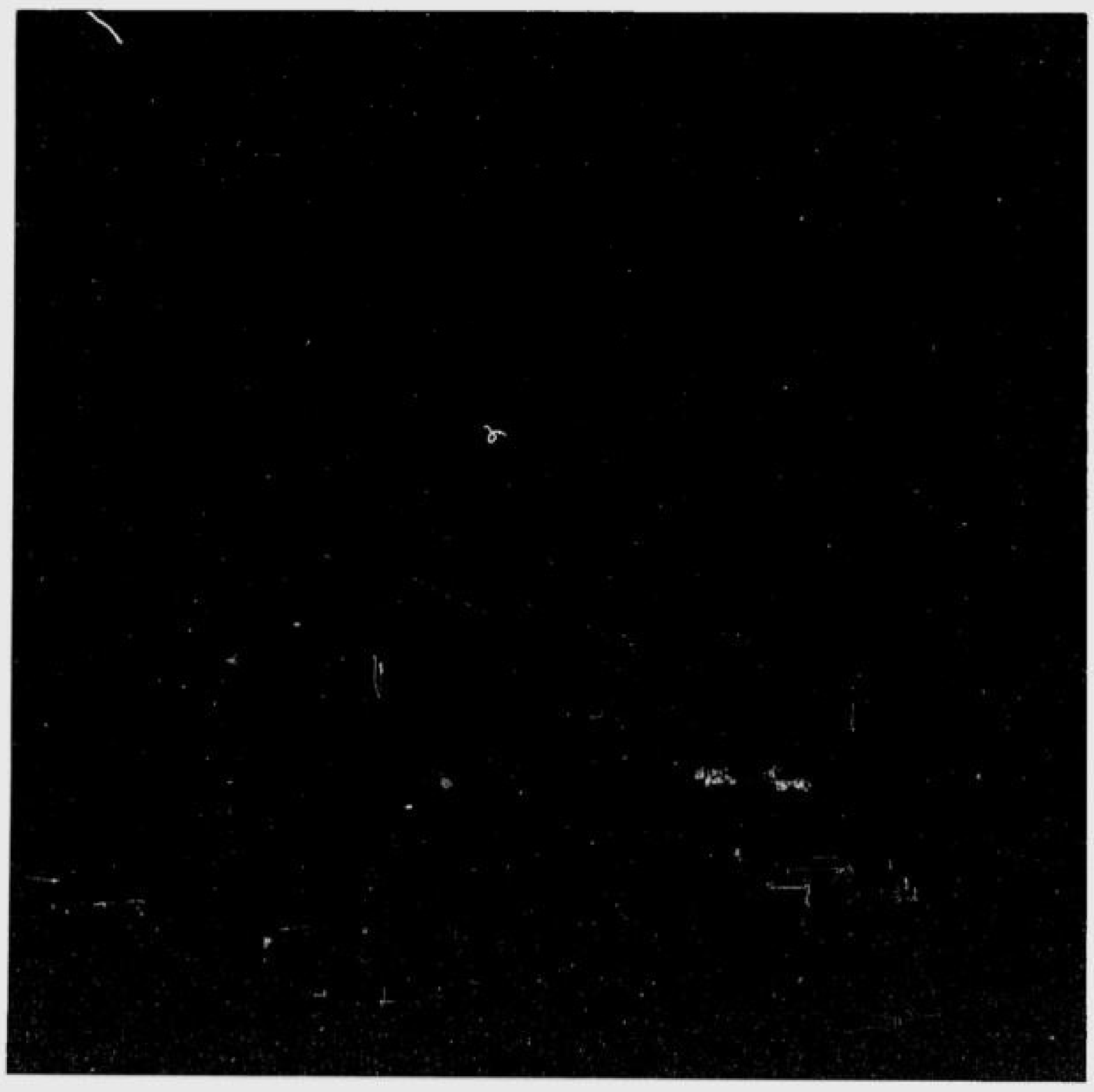

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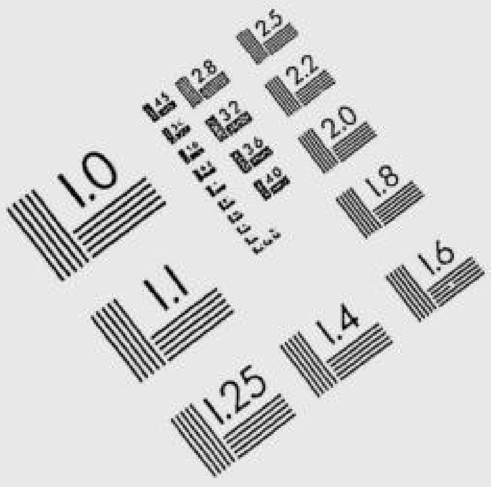

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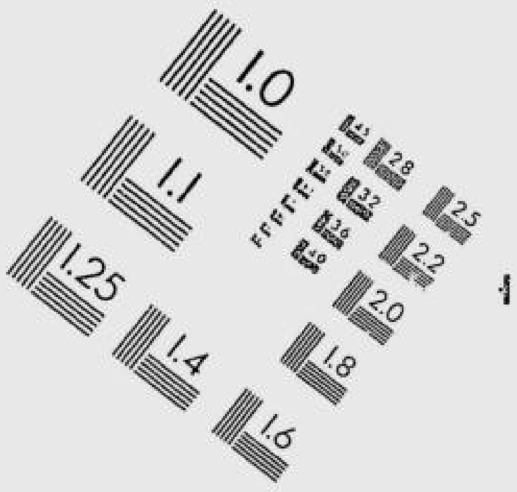

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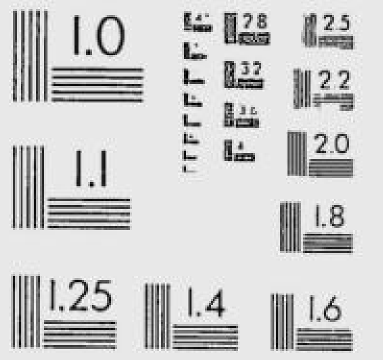

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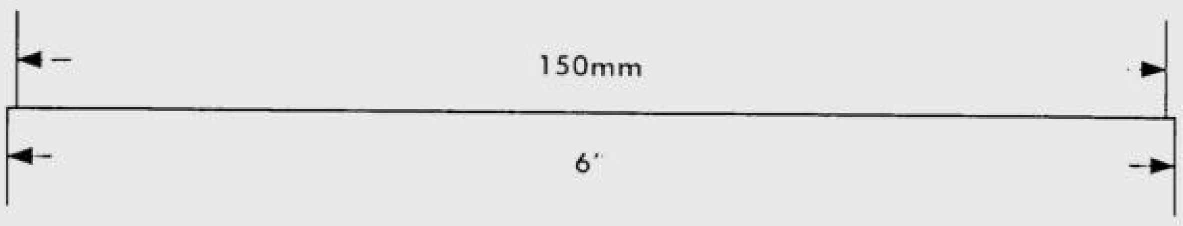

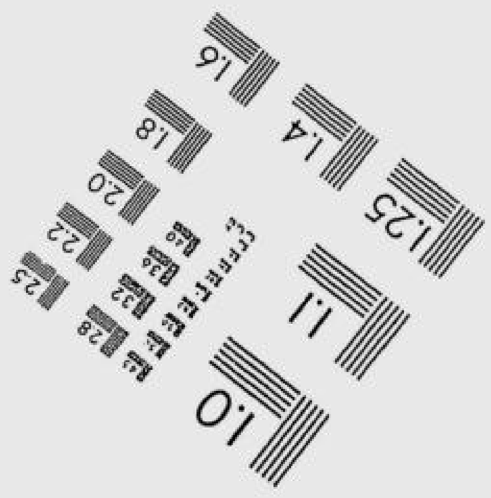

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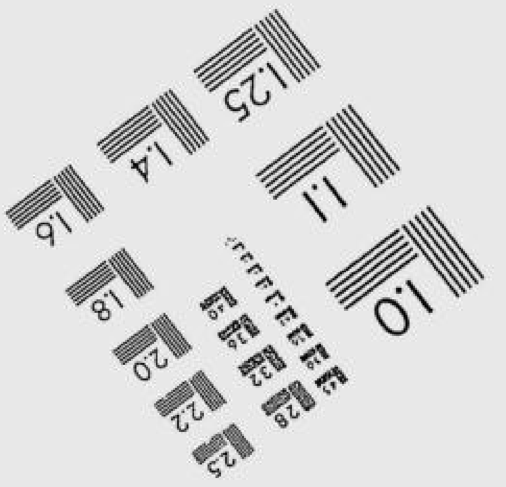

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